

The Iron Fist character, Danny Rand, is depicted in a dynamic, action-oriented pose. He is wearing his signature yellow helmet with a black visor and a brown trench coat. He is holding a silver handgun in his right hand and has his left arm extended forward, palm facing down, as if using his chi powers. The background is a dark, textured green with swirling, ethereal yellow and green energy patterns. Several yellow energy spheres and small yellow sparks are scattered around him. The overall tone is dramatic and intense.

THE IMMORTAL
IRON FIST[®]
THE BOOK OF THE IRON FIST

MARVEL

VOL
3

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"The Ed Brubaker-Matt Fraction brain trust drums up a skillful script that jauntily grants a peripheral Marvel character some hard-earned days of glory."

— *Entertainment Weekly*

DANNY RAND IS THE IRON FIST. BUT DANNY RAND IS NOT THE ONLY IRON FIST!

There have been sixty-six men and women to carry the mantle of the Immortal Iron Fist. Men and women of great courage, valor, skill and sacrifice. They are weapons wielded against the wicked in the name of the heavenly city of K'un-Lun. They have loved to live as an Iron Fist, and loved to die as an Iron Fist.

The Book of the Iron Fist tells their story. It is a story of epic adventure that takes place a millenium ago, in the here and now and at all stops between. It is the story of the Immortal Iron Fists and the timeless chain that binds them together in honor.

Collecting *Immortal Iron Fist* #7 and #15-16, *Immortal Iron Fist: Orson Randall and the Green Mist of Death* and *Immortal Iron Fist: The Origin of Danny Rand*.



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THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST[®] *THE BOOK OF THE IRON FIST*



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THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST[®]

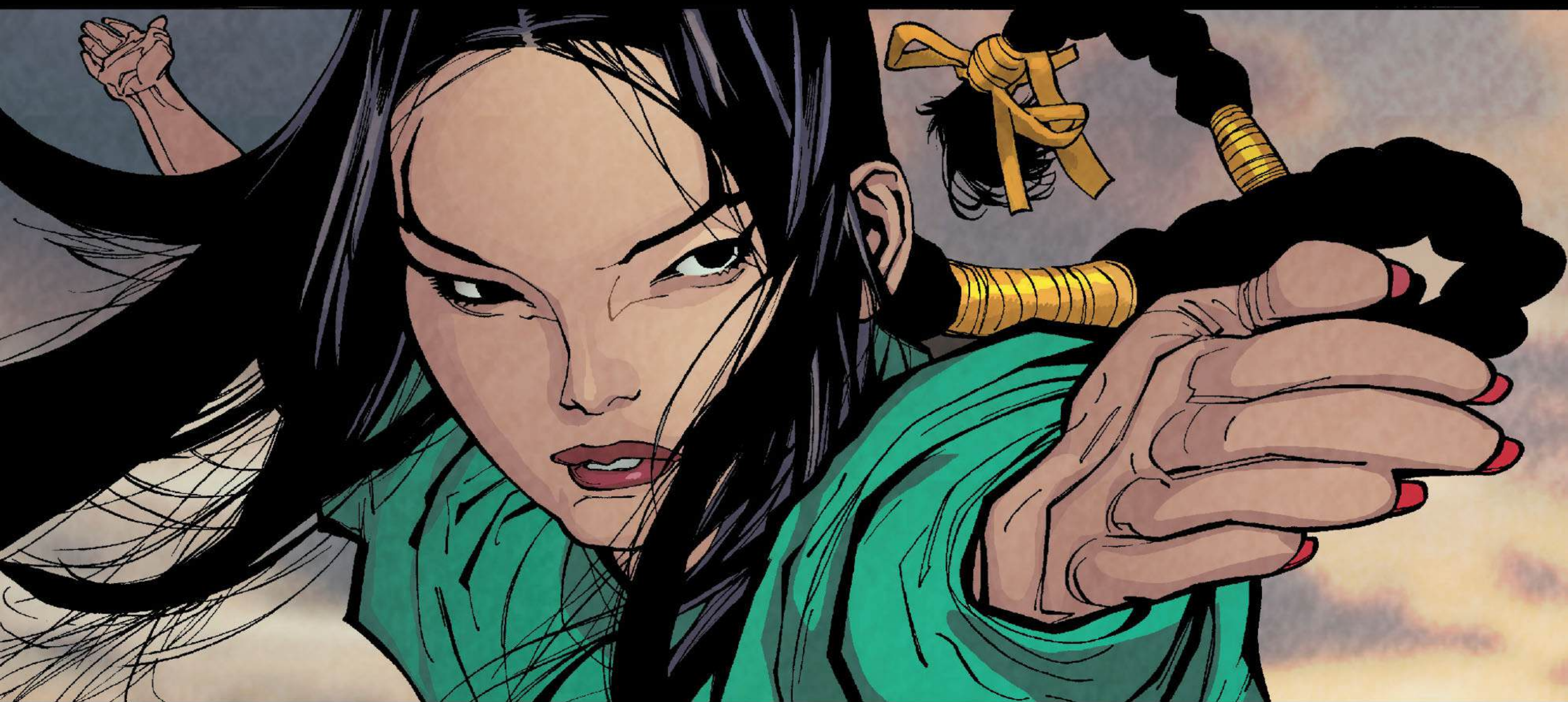
**BRUBAKER
FRACTION
FOREMAN
FERNANDEZ
EVANS
BROWN**

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There have been sixty-six men and women to carry the mantle of THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST throughout the ages, men and women of great courage, valor, skill, and sacrifice. Sixty-six men and women have stood between man and the unstoppable forces of evil, willing to give all they have to hold back the hordes.

This is the story of one of them, as told in THE BOOK OF THE IRON FIST.

The Story of the Iron Fist Wu Ao-Shi



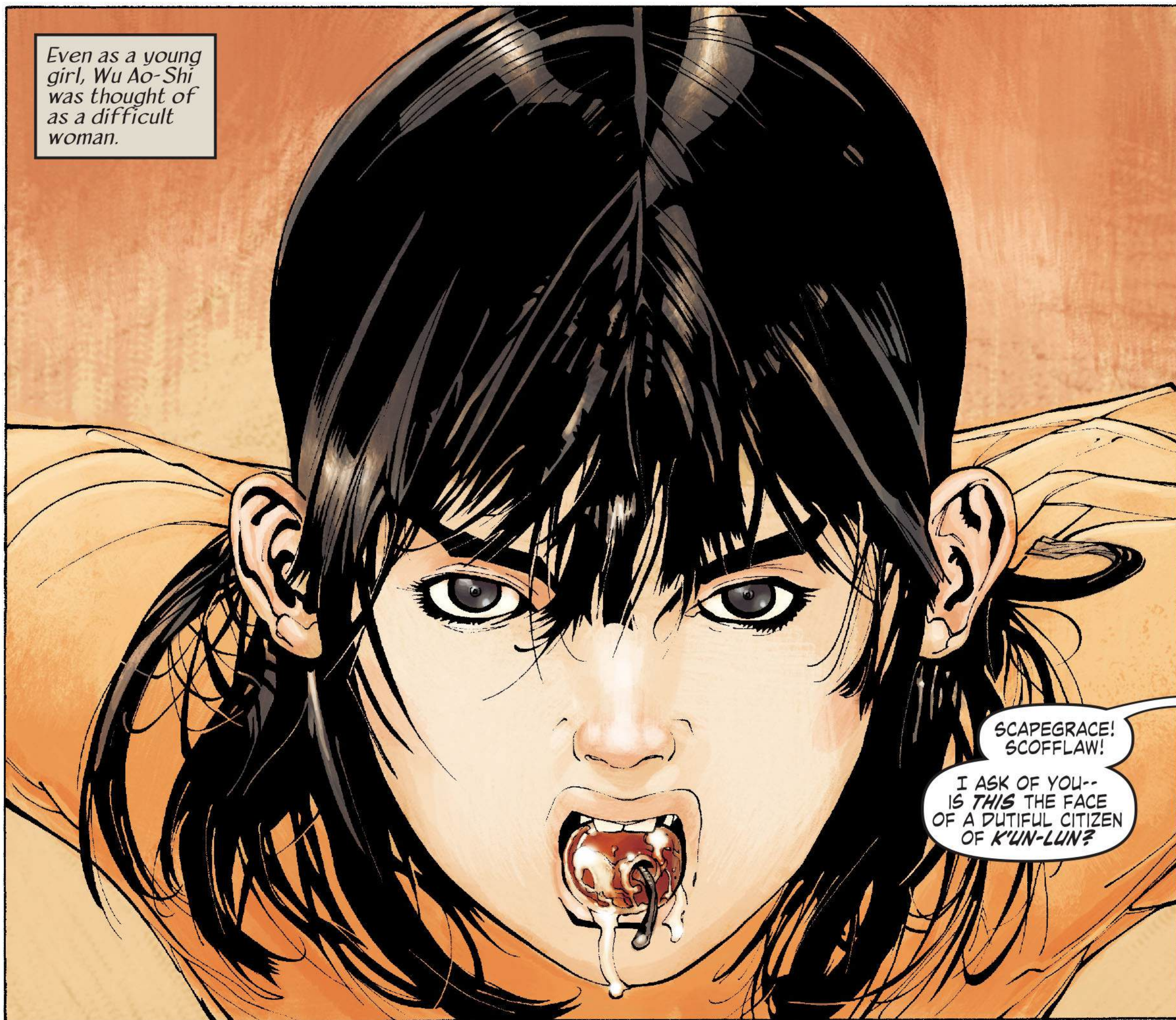
The Pirate Queen of Pinghai Bay

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Even as a young girl, Wu Ao-Shi was thought of as a difficult woman.



SCAPEGRACE!
SCOFFLAW!

I ASK OF YOU--
IS *THIS* THE FACE
OF A DUTIFUL CITIZEN
OF K'UN-LUN?



I AM
BUT A MODEST
VENDOR OF GLASS
ROSE-BLOSSOM
CHERRIES--

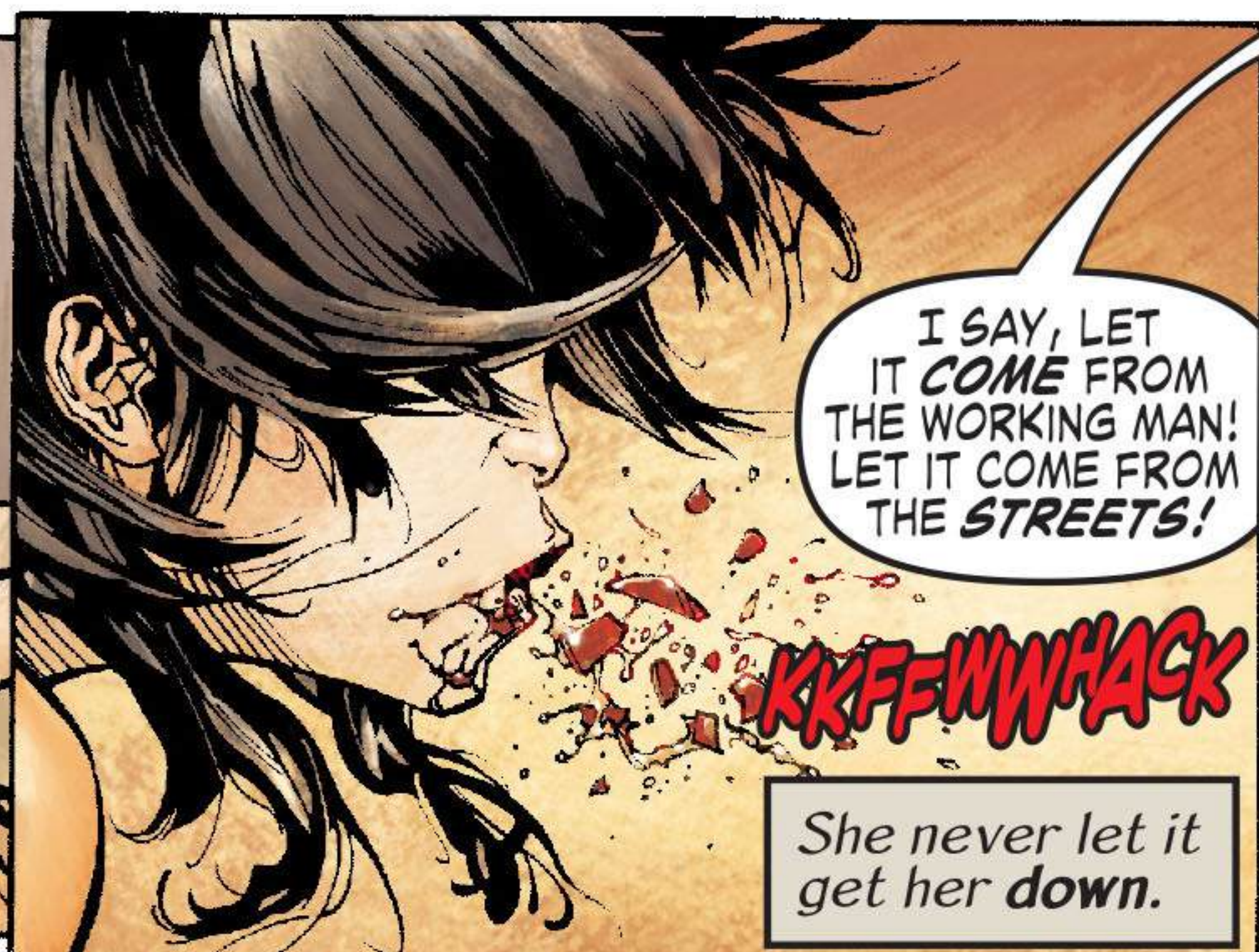
--THE FINEST IN
ALL K'UN-LUN--

AND THIS
SNEAK THIEF SHAMES
MY HARD WORK AND OUR
SACRED CITY WITH HER
LOW BEHAVIOR.



WHERE
SHALL WE FIND
JUSTICE FOR THE
WORKING MAN?

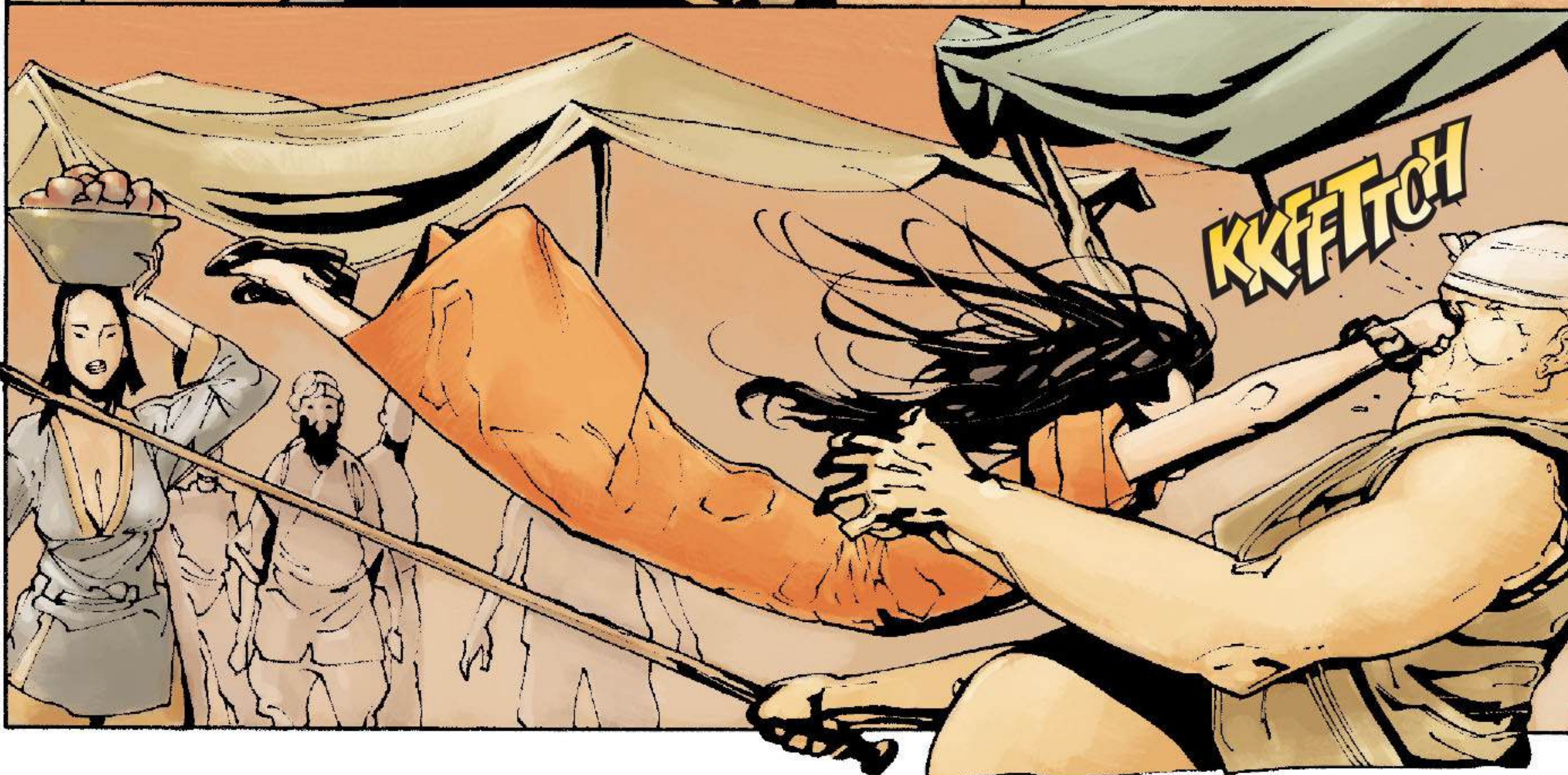
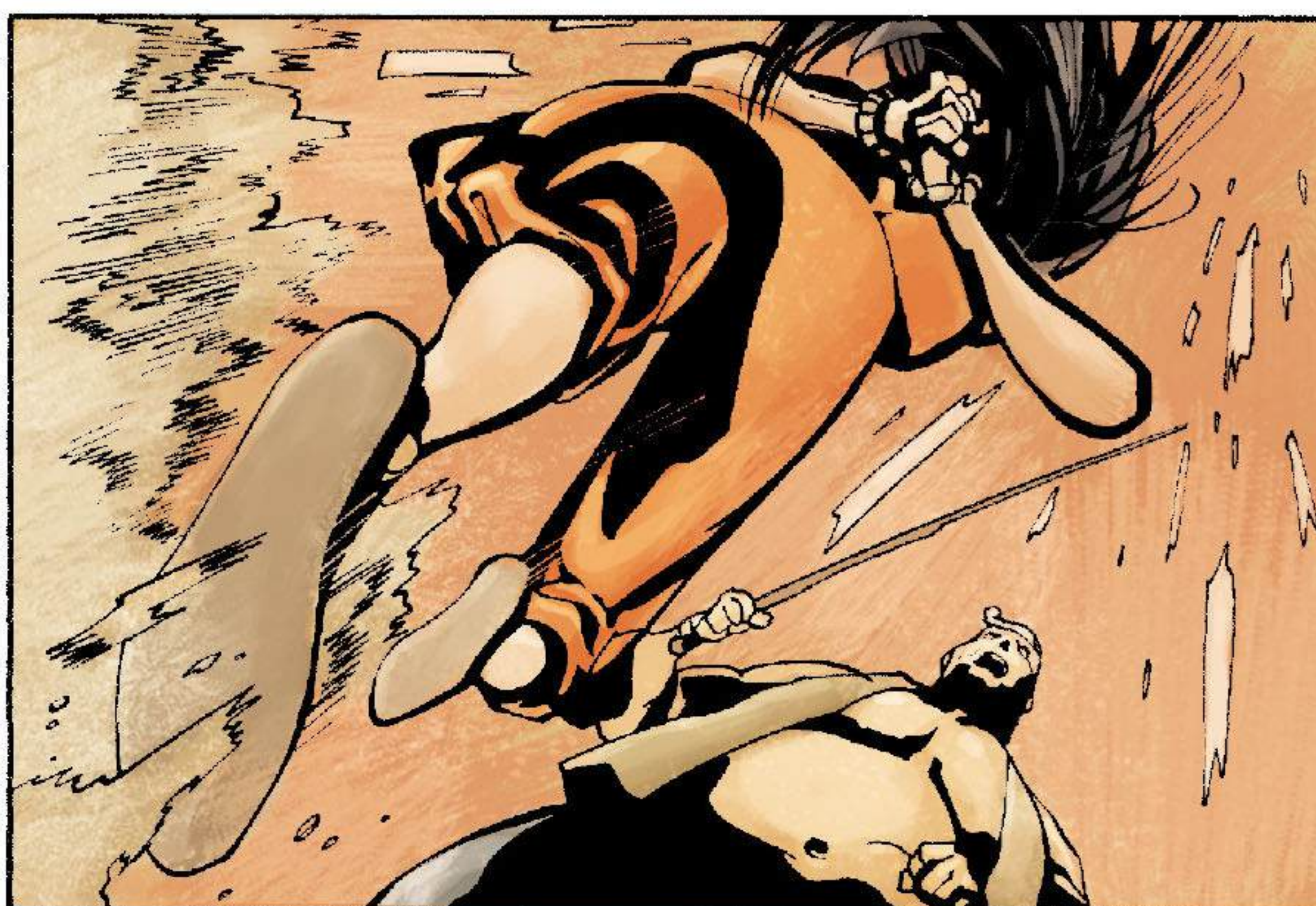
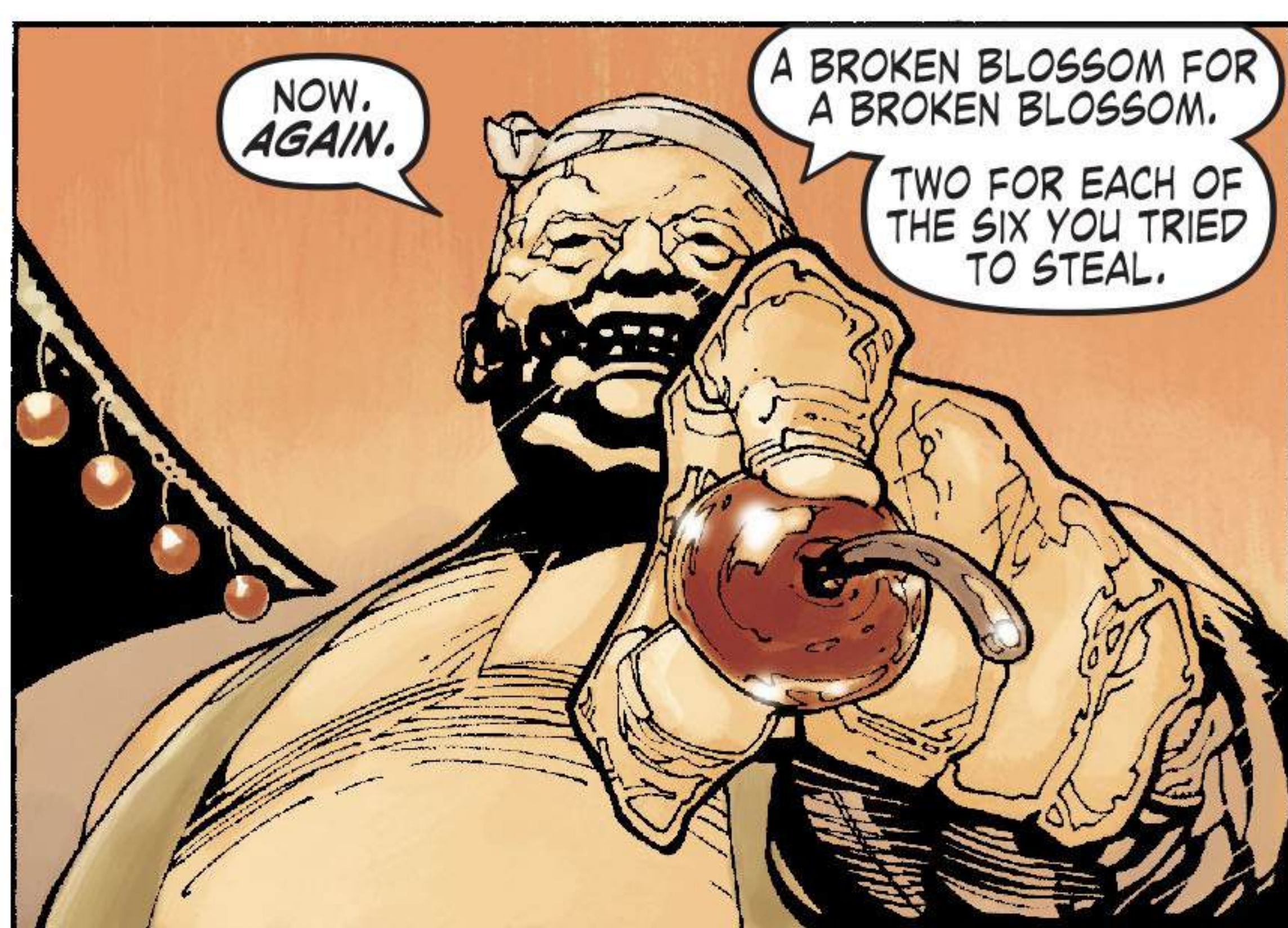
WHERE
SHALL HE FIND
HIS HARD-EARNED
RECOMPENSE?



I SAY, LET
IT *COME* FROM
THE WORKING MAN!
LET IT COME FROM
THE *STREETS!*

KKFFWHACK

She never let it
get her *down.*



It would take a braver soul than your humble narrator to ask the Thunderer why he did what he did that day. Until he decides otherwise, his motives must remain his own...



YOU. GIRL.



STAY QUIET, LITTLE ONE. EVEN IF YOU'VE NEVER MANAGED TO STAY QUIET *ONCE* IN YOUR MISERABLE LIFE, I IMPLORE YOU TO *STAY QUIET* NOW.

NOT ONLY SHOULD IT HEAL *UNDISTURBED* BUT, LOOKING AT YOU, I GET THE FEELING...

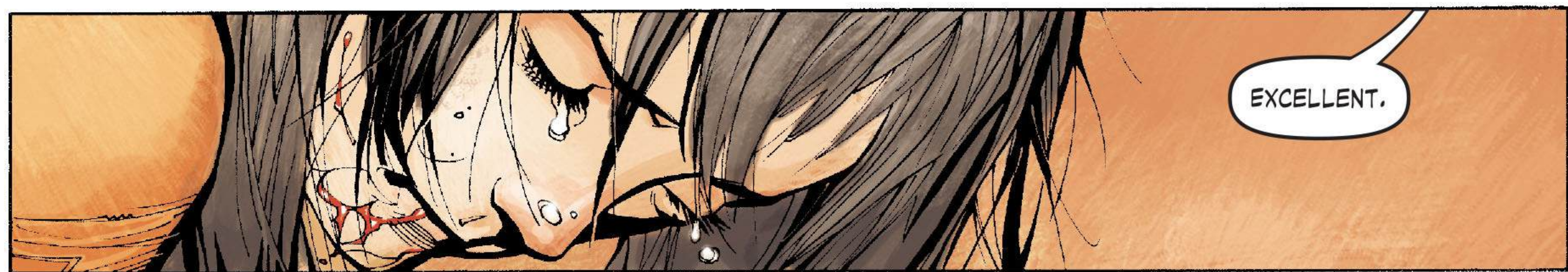


...THAT WHEN YOU *DO* OPEN YOUR MOUTH, ALL KINDS OF *HELL* FOLLOW.



IF YOU LISTEN TO ME, I WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE.

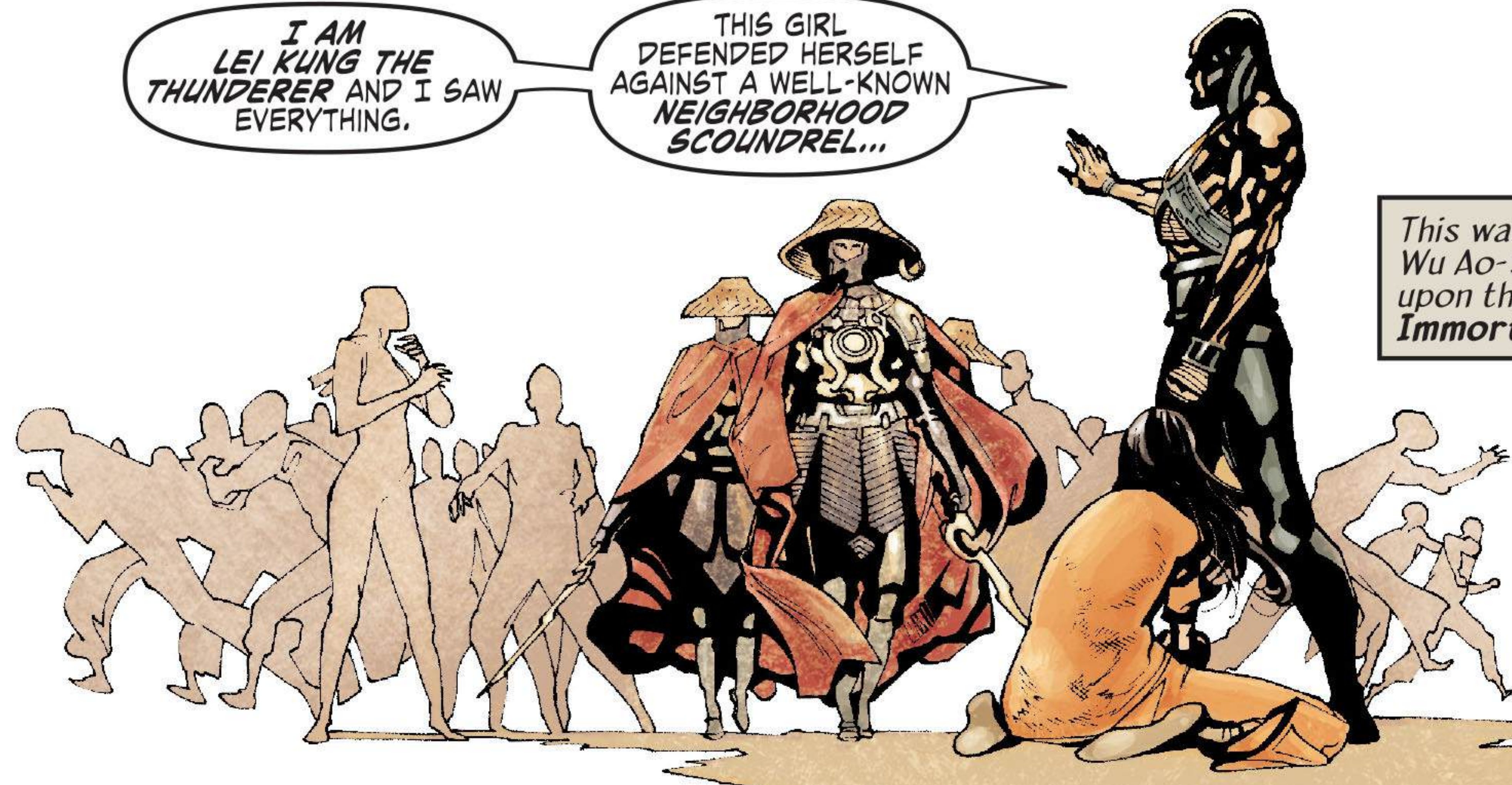
YOU ARE WELCOME TO CHALLENGE THE ASSERTION.



EXCELLENT.

I AM *LEI KUNG THE THUNDERER* AND I SAW EVERYTHING.

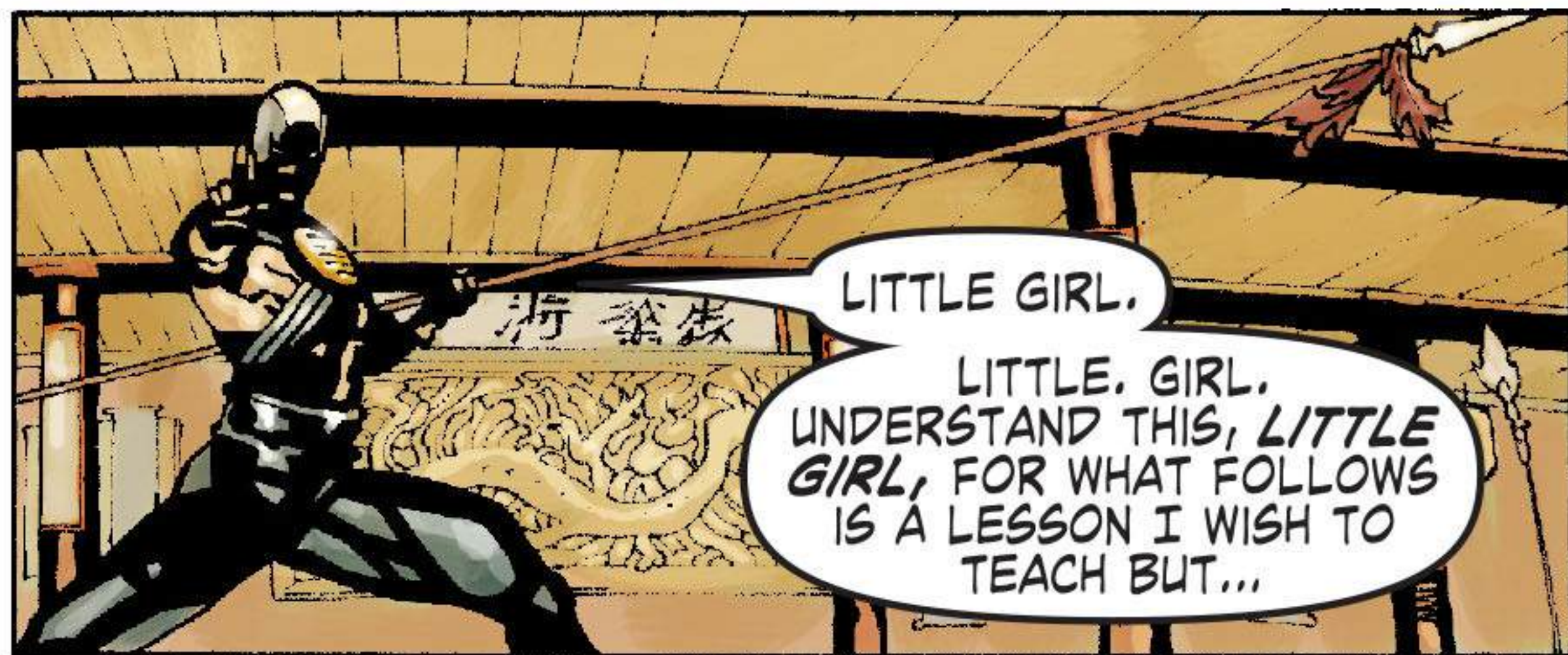
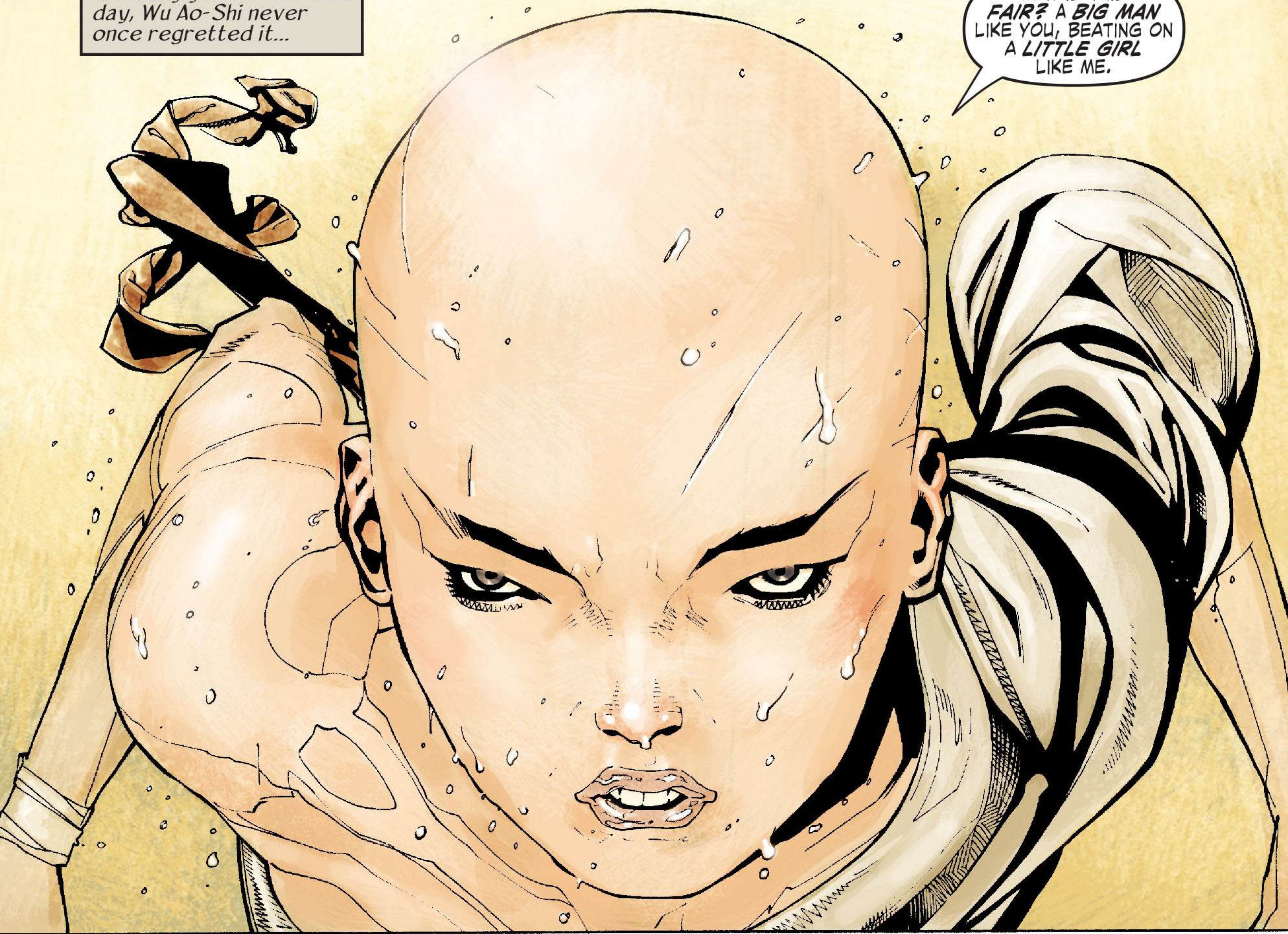
THIS GIRL DEFENDED HERSELF AGAINST A WELL-KNOWN *NEIGHBORHOOD SCOUNDREL*...



This was the day that Wu Ao-Shi was set upon the path of the *Immortal Iron Fist*.

And in spite of the many beatings she took over the many years after that day, Wu Ao-Shi never once regretted it...

HOW IS THIS FAIR? A BIG MAN LIKE YOU, BEATING ON A LITTLE GIRL LIKE ME.



LITTLE GIRL.
LITTLE GIRL.
UNDERSTAND THIS, LITTLE GIRL, FOR WHAT FOLLOWS IS A LESSON I WISH TO TEACH BUT...



...ONCE!

FWHAM



NOTHING WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU IN THIS LIFE!



EVERY COMFORT AND PRIVILEGE YOU MAY KNOW...



...YOU WILL HAVE TO EARN.





I MYSELF AM HUNGRY ALMOST EVERY SINGLE DAY.

It was the first thing she had ever been given.



And a fine start to their lives together.



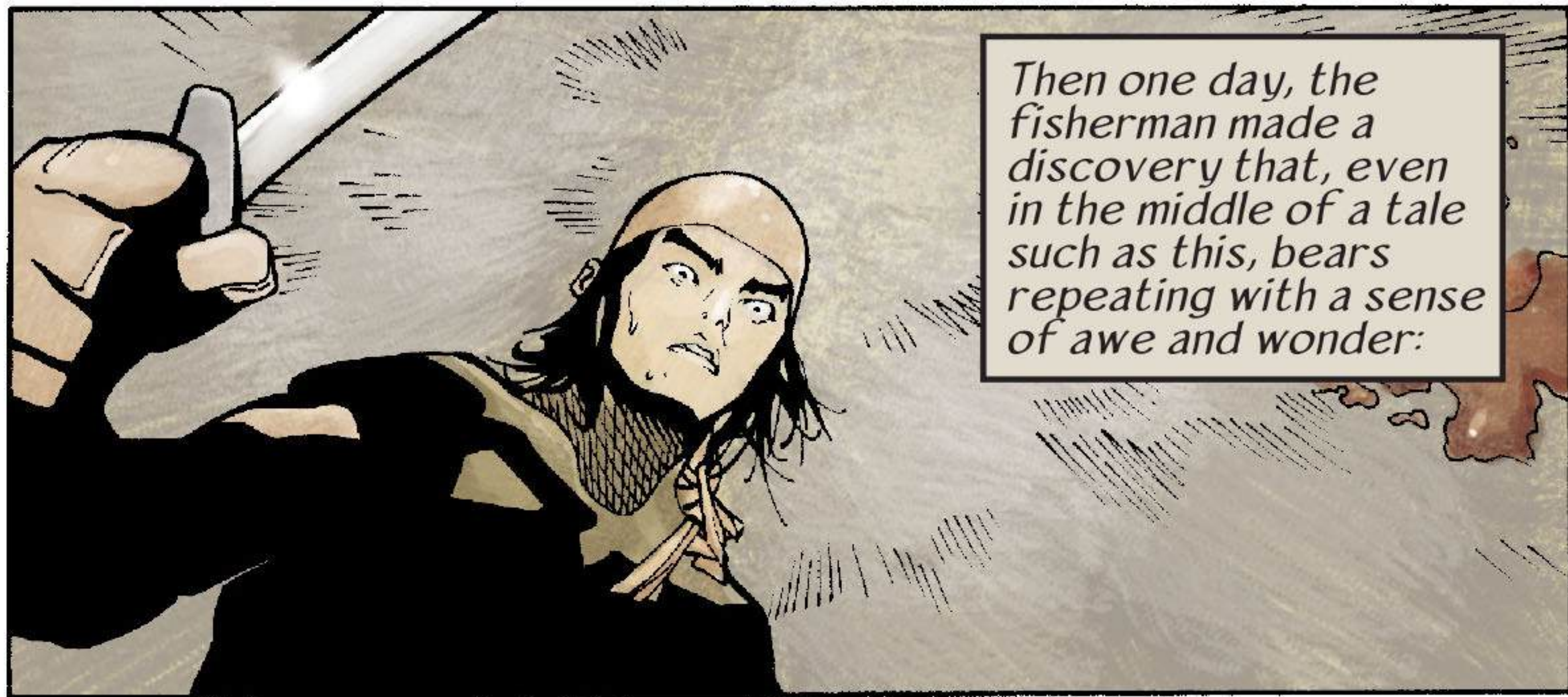
I DON'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME A MAN TOUCHED ME AND WASN'T PUNCHING ME.

They were in love.



It was cute.

Not cloying, but cute. They were a nice couple.

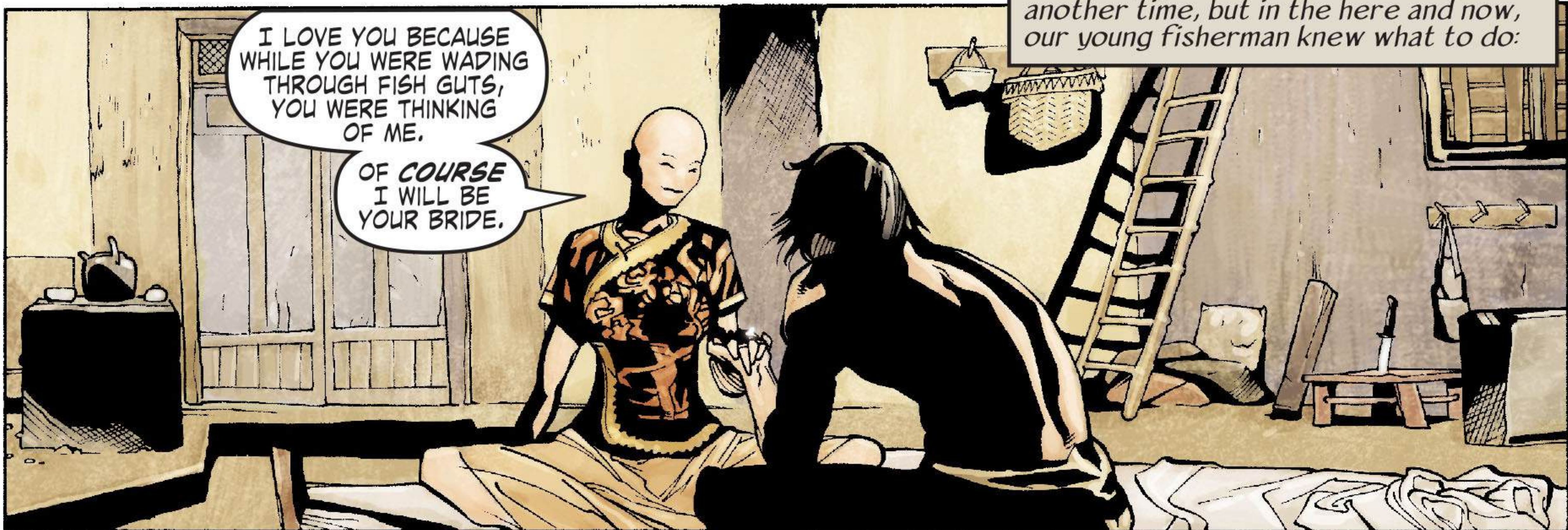


Then one day, the fisherman made a discovery that, even in the middle of a tale such as this, bears repeating with a sense of awe and wonder:



Two perfect rings made of the purest silver.

Now, **who** those rings belonged to and **how** they got **inside** a fish is a tale for another time, but in the here and now, our young fisherman knew what to do:



I LOVE YOU BECAUSE WHILE YOU WERE WADING THROUGH FISH GUTS, YOU WERE THINKING OF ME.

OF COURSE I WILL BE YOUR BRIDE.

But Wu Ao-Shi was set on the path of the Iron Fist, K'un-Lun's Immortal Weapon. A warrior infused with the life force of a mighty dragon's heart. But to become Iron Fist...

...THE **PERILS** INVOLVED FAR OUTWEIGH THE **REWARD!**

ARE YOU READY TO RISK **DEATH** TO GAIN THE POWER OF **THE IRON FIST?!**

...you must **take** that life force.

YES. I AM READY.

Many that came before Wu Ao-Shi have thought that they were ready, too.

But they weren't. Just as she wasn't.

Neither was he.

And that, dear reader, was the contradiction at the heart of these two:

She was a **weapon** waiting to be wielded upon the wicked in the name of the heavenly city of K'un-Lun.

He caught fish.

HO, ARCHAIC ONE! I COME TO **TAKE** THAT WHICH ONLY I MAY OWN!

How could he live knowing his love was destined to be the first woman who dared face the ancient menace of...

...Shou-Lao,
the Undying!

The ancient and
venerated beast that
protects K'un-Lun in
between the eras of
its Immortal Weapon.

Many of K'un-
Lun's finest
citizenry were
there at Wu Ao-
Shi's challenge.

Some of them wanted to
witness the next Iron Fist's
birth. Others wished to
witness Wu Ao-Shi's **death**.

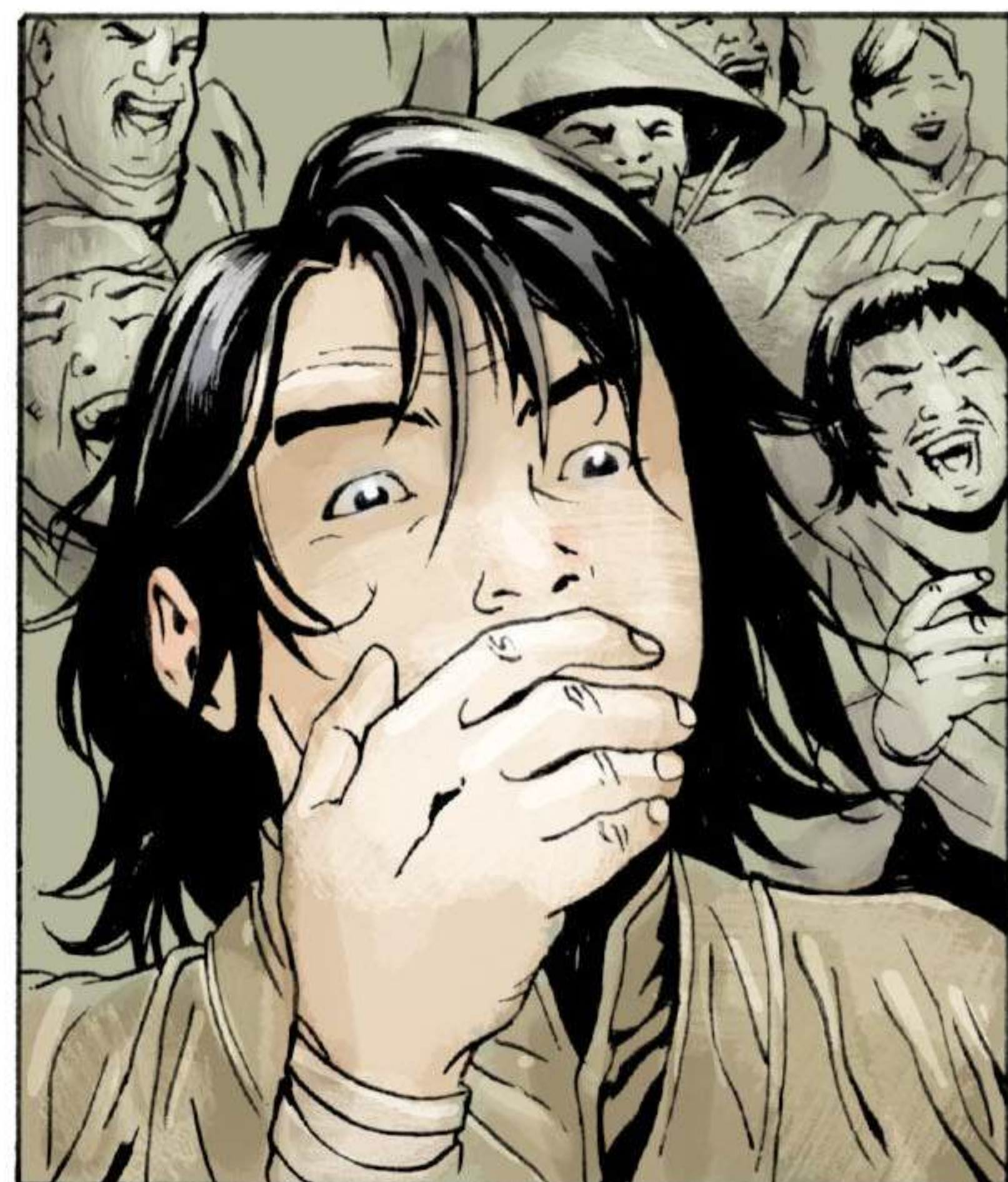
But all of them--
save **one**--actually
watched.

K'un-Lun is a
place without
many clocks...

And with few
people interested
in watching them...

But if it
wasn't...

And if
they
were...





AND THEN I WENT--
HIYAH!

YES, DEAR.

AND THEN
HIYAH!

YES, DEAR.

AND THEN I
SQUEEZED THE
VERY LIFE FROM
THE BEAST!

...

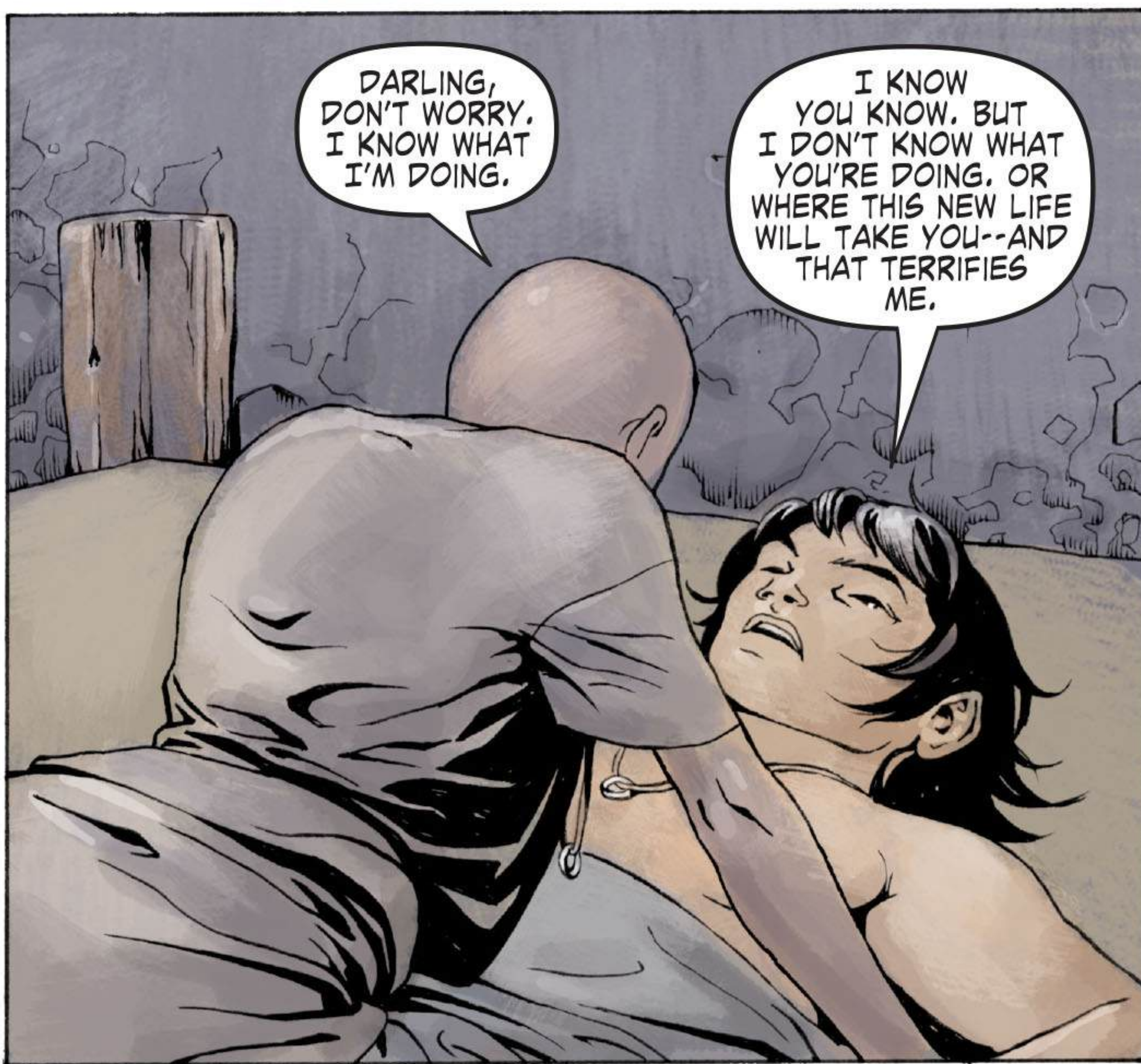
YES, DEAR.



MY LOVE,
WHAT TROUBLES
YOU?

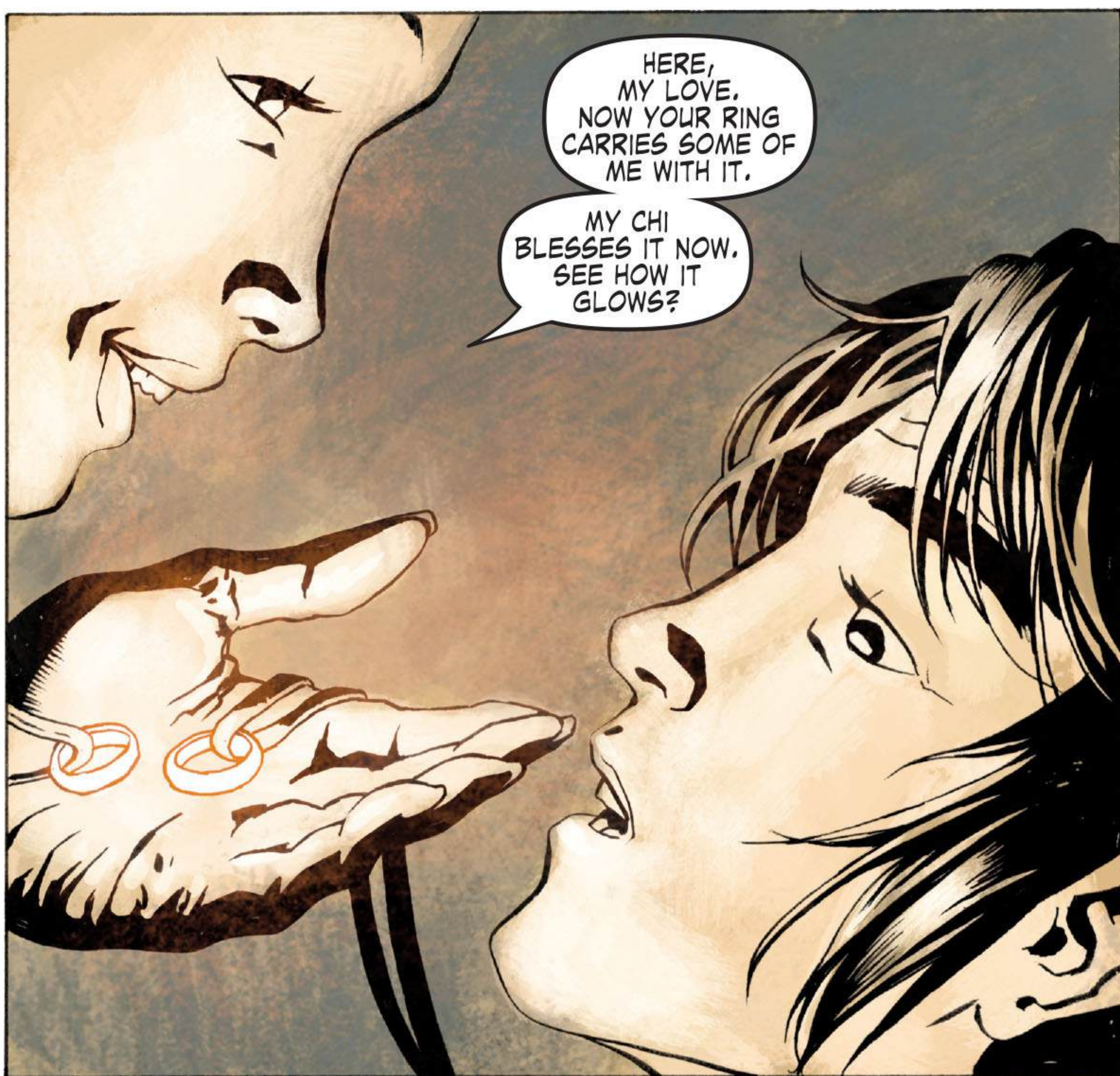
I'M
TIRED,
IS ALL.

THERE WAS
AN AWFUL LOT OF
HIYAH-ING AND BEASTS
AND LIFE-OR-DEATH
CONTESTS FOR
ONE DAY.



DARLING,
DON'T WORRY.
I KNOW WHAT
I'M DOING.

I KNOW
YOU KNOW. BUT
I DON'T KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE DOING. OR
WHERE THIS NEW LIFE
WILL TAKE YOU--AND
THAT TERRIFIES
ME.



HERE,
MY LOVE.
NOW YOUR RING
CARRIES SOME OF
ME WITH IT.

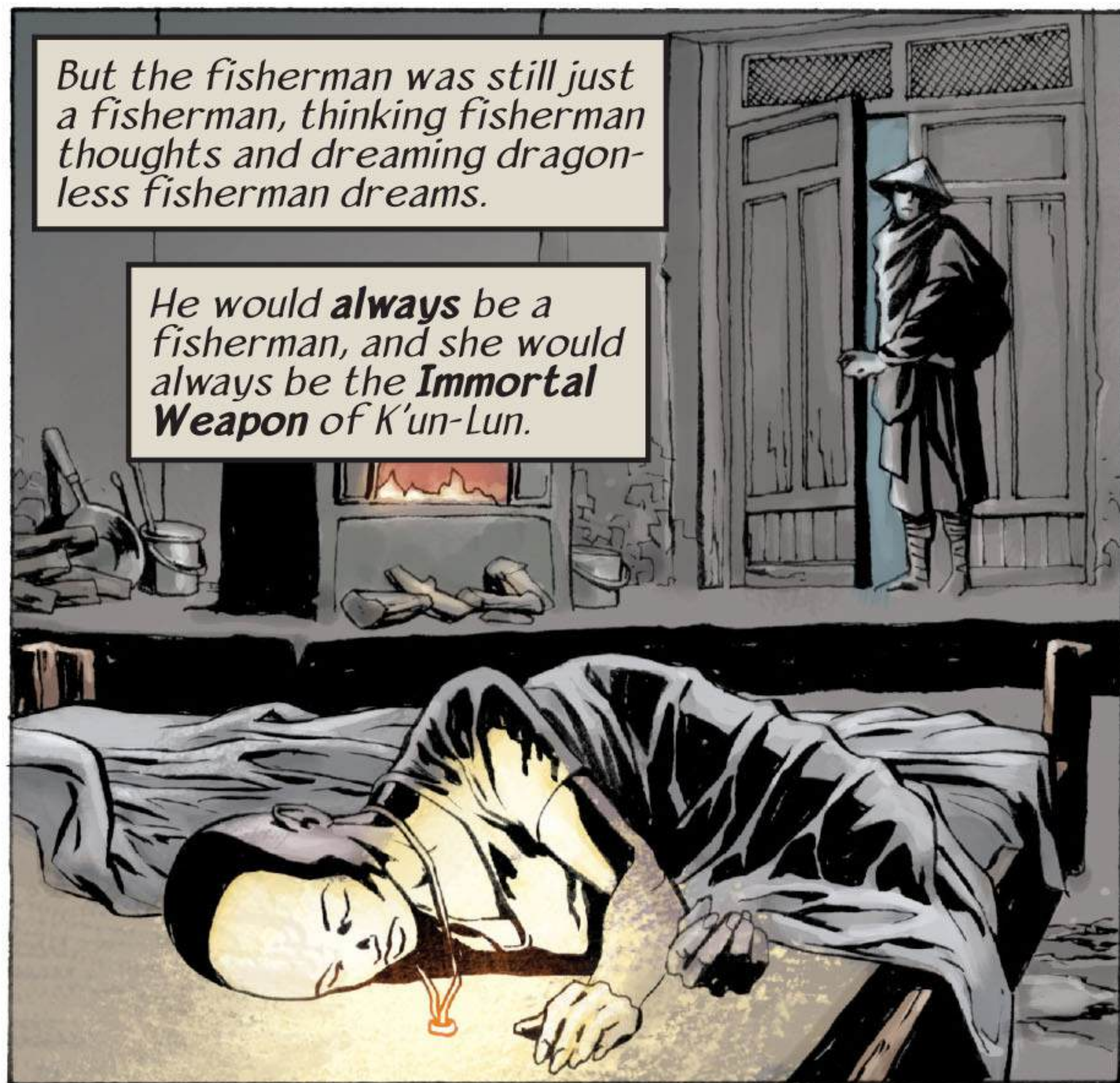
MY CHI
BLESSES IT NOW.
SEE HOW IT
GLOWS?



IT MEANS
I AM NEAR
YOU.

AND
THAT I LOVE
YOU.

AND
THAT I STILL
LIVE.



But the fisherman was still just a fisherman, thinking fisherman thoughts and dreaming dragon-less fisherman dreams.

He would **always** be a fisherman, and she would always be the **Immortal Weapon** of K'un-Lun.



Same **planet**, different **worlds**.

He would never ask her not to be who she was, but he knew in his heart he could not **take** watching her risk her life time and time again.



On that magic day that K'un-Lun intersected with the world of men, the fisherman decided to **leave**.

He could never stand between his true love and her destiny, so he would go fish elsewhere--far away from dragons and kung fu and dying of slow, sick worry.

Wu Ao-Shi found this choice **unacceptable**.



AS YOU KNOW, K'UN-LUN APPEARS IN THE WORLD OF MEN ONCE A DECADE, AND--

I WISH TO **LEAVE**.

Destiny has a way of not really caring **what** you think.



It was well within her rights to leave. It was law; it was allowed; it was her **choice**. But Yu-Ti knew in his old, bitter bones **why** she was leaving:

DO YOU WISH TO TELL ME... THAT YOU WOULD **LEAVE** THE HEAVENLY CITY AND CHOOSE **LOVE** OVER **DUTY**?

And it infuriated him.



But to Wu Ao-Shi, love and duty were one and the same.

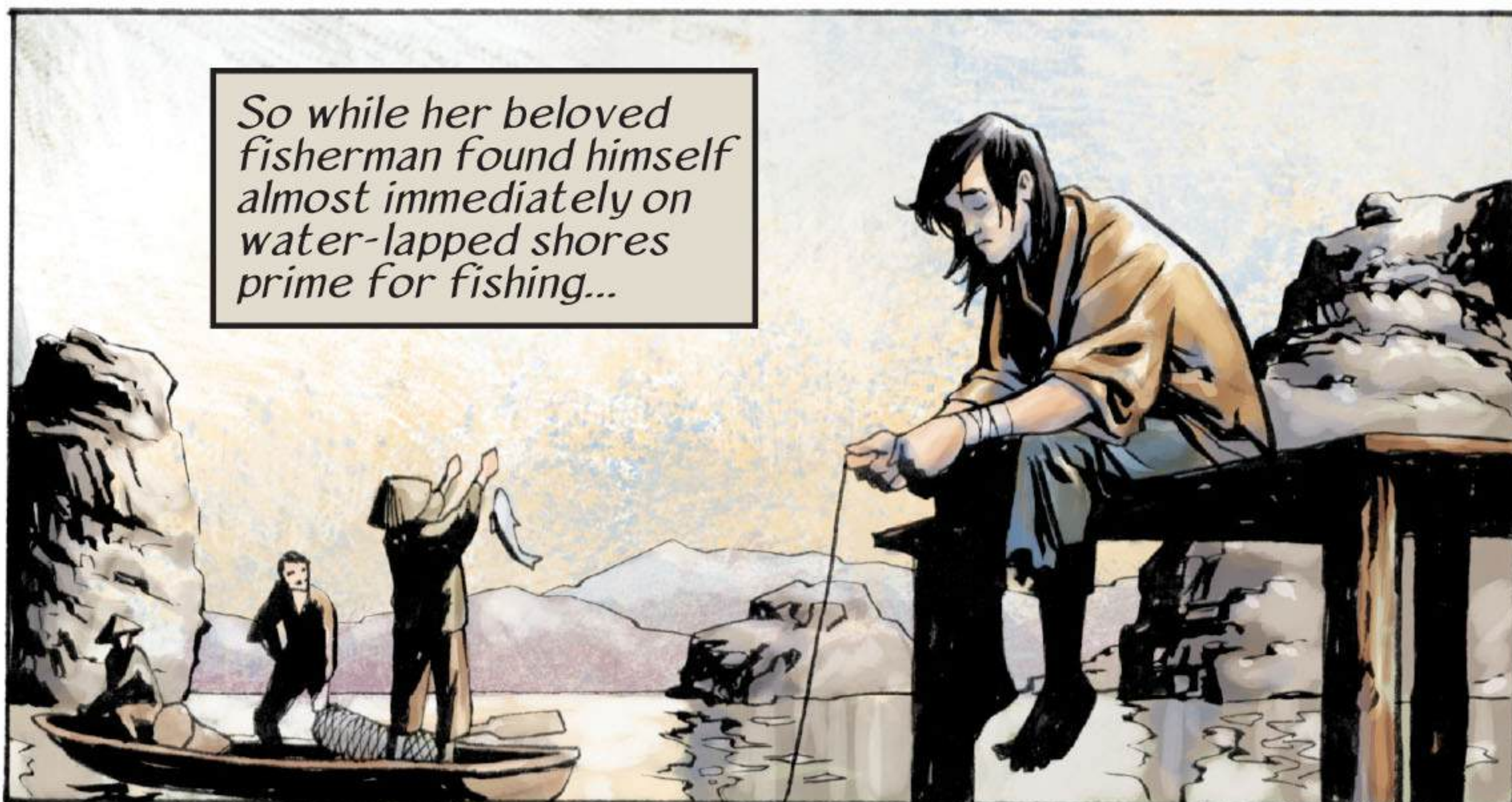
Old, bitter men with old, bitter bones have trouble remembering that sometimes.



...WOMEN ARE **INFURIATING**.



Wu's first mistake was assuming everyone left K'un-Lun the same way, but no road out of the Heavenly City follows the same path.



So while her beloved fisherman found himself almost immediately on water-lapped shores prime for fishing...



Wu Ao-Shi's path was considerably more unpleasant. She always suspected this was a parting gift from Yu-Ti.

Regardless, a little snow would not stop her.



Nothing would stop her.

Lost in the world of men for the first time in her life, lost in a world where people needed **money** to **eat** and if they didn't eat, they starved...

Wu decided that, while she searched for her true love, she would do what she knew best.



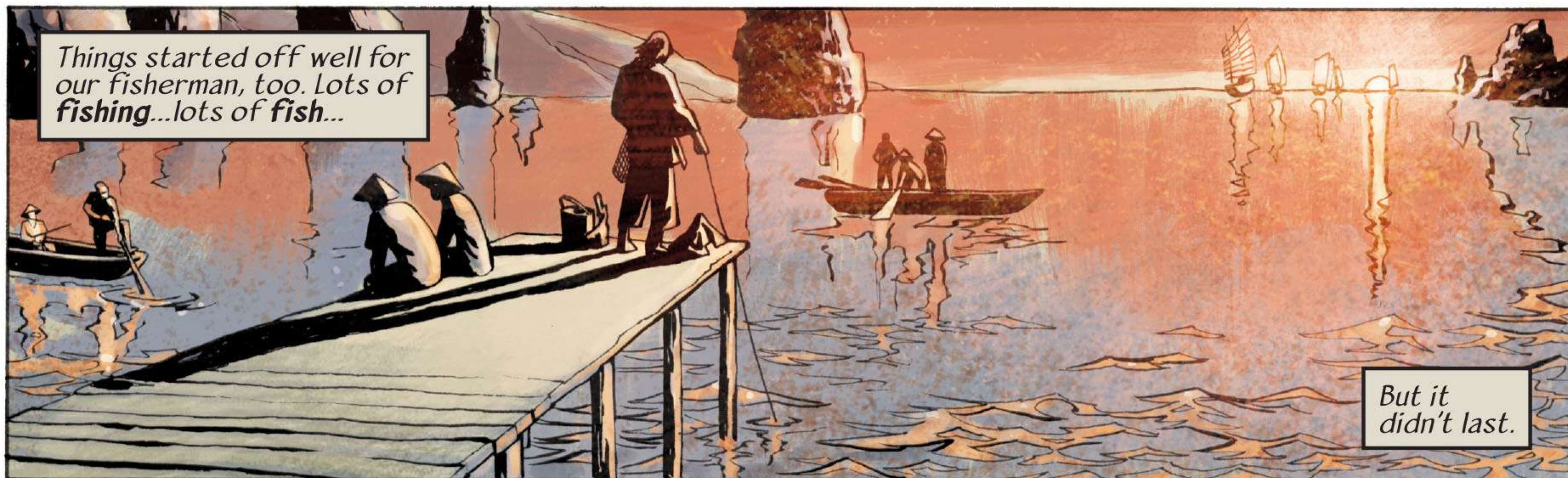
She beat people up.

For money.



These were the good times.

The glory days when her legend was seeded and spread from village to village.



Things started off well for our fisherman, too. Lots of **fishing**...lots of **fish**...

But it didn't last.



Our time in Heaven is always fleeting.



Hell always stalks on its heels.

So hold onto the good times, precious ones. Hold onto those golden days.



Because you never know when **Wokou** pirates will show up, steal or burn all your earthly belongings, and **enslave** you and all of your **friends**.

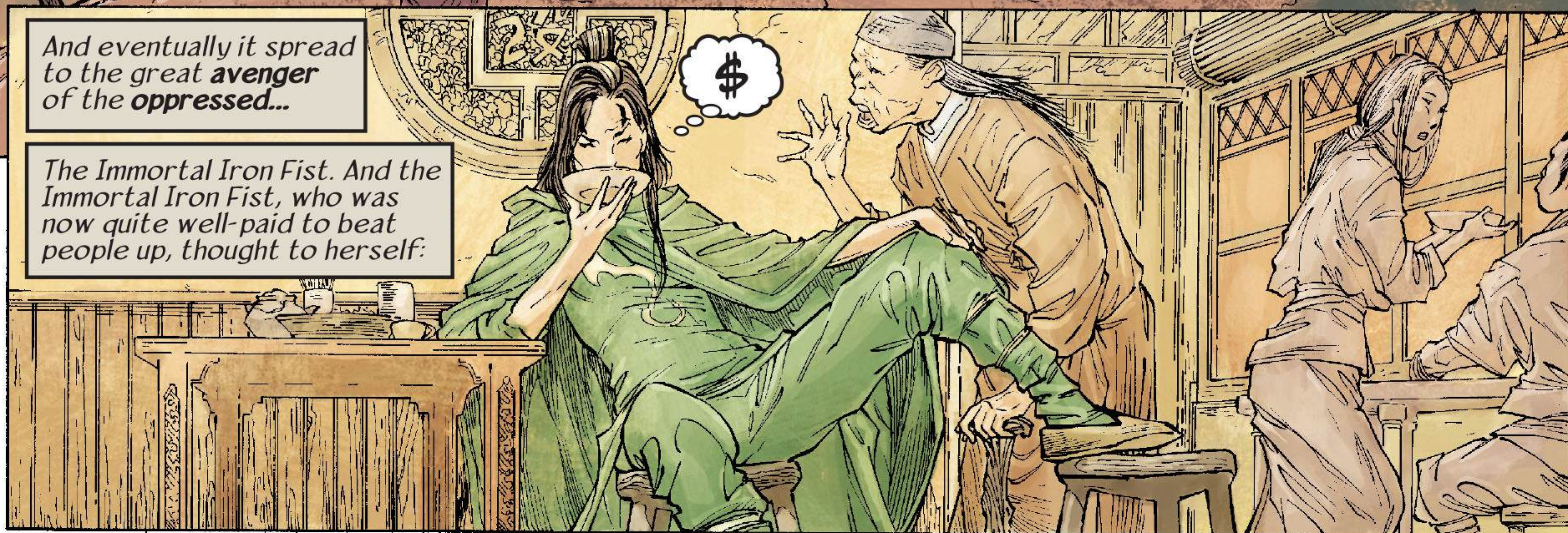
Try as they might, the pirates couldn't kill **everybody**.



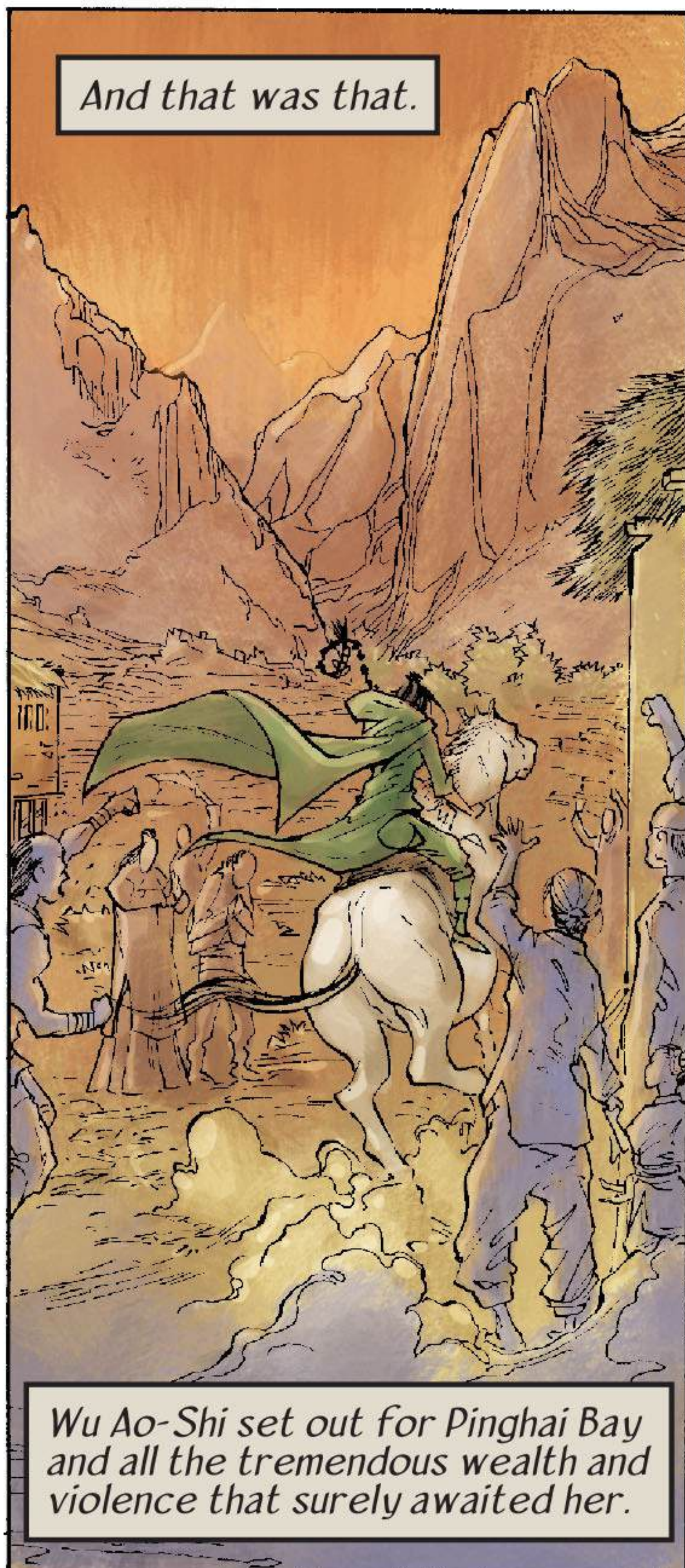
Eventually the news that Pinghai Bay was now in the grip of tyrant pirates spread from village to village.

And eventually it spread to the great **avenger** of the **oppressed**...

The Immortal Iron Fist. And the Immortal Iron Fist, who was now quite well-paid to beat people up, thought to herself:



And that was that.



Wu Ao-Shi set out for Pinghai Bay and all the tremendous wealth and violence that surely awaited her.

Arriving in Pinghai, she found it remarkably easy to enter the town undetected.

See?



And if Wu had learned anything about the world of men she now wandered, it was this:

If you want to find the head tyrant in charge, follow the flow of **loosened ladies** to his bedchamber. For surely you will find there...



The Pirate King!

Felled by golden slumbers and
soiled doves of easy virtue!

**PIRATE
KING!**
PINGHAI BAY
IS NOW UNDER
MY RULE.

YOU AND YOUR
FLUNKIES HAVE UNTIL
SUNRISE TO FLEE--LEST YOU
FACE *PUNISHMENT* AT THE
HANDS OF THE *IMMORTAL
IRON FIST*.

CUTE.

PIRATE HAREM! RID
ME OF THIS *LOUD AND
COMPLAINING WENCH*
THAT DARED DISTURB
OUR "SLEEP."

The Lessons of the Tactical Warrior, vol. 26,
as written by Lei Kung the Thunderer,
teaches us, "Never awaken a sleeping pirate
and his boudoir army of fallen women."

But our Wu
was never one
for reading.



Fighting was a wholly different story.



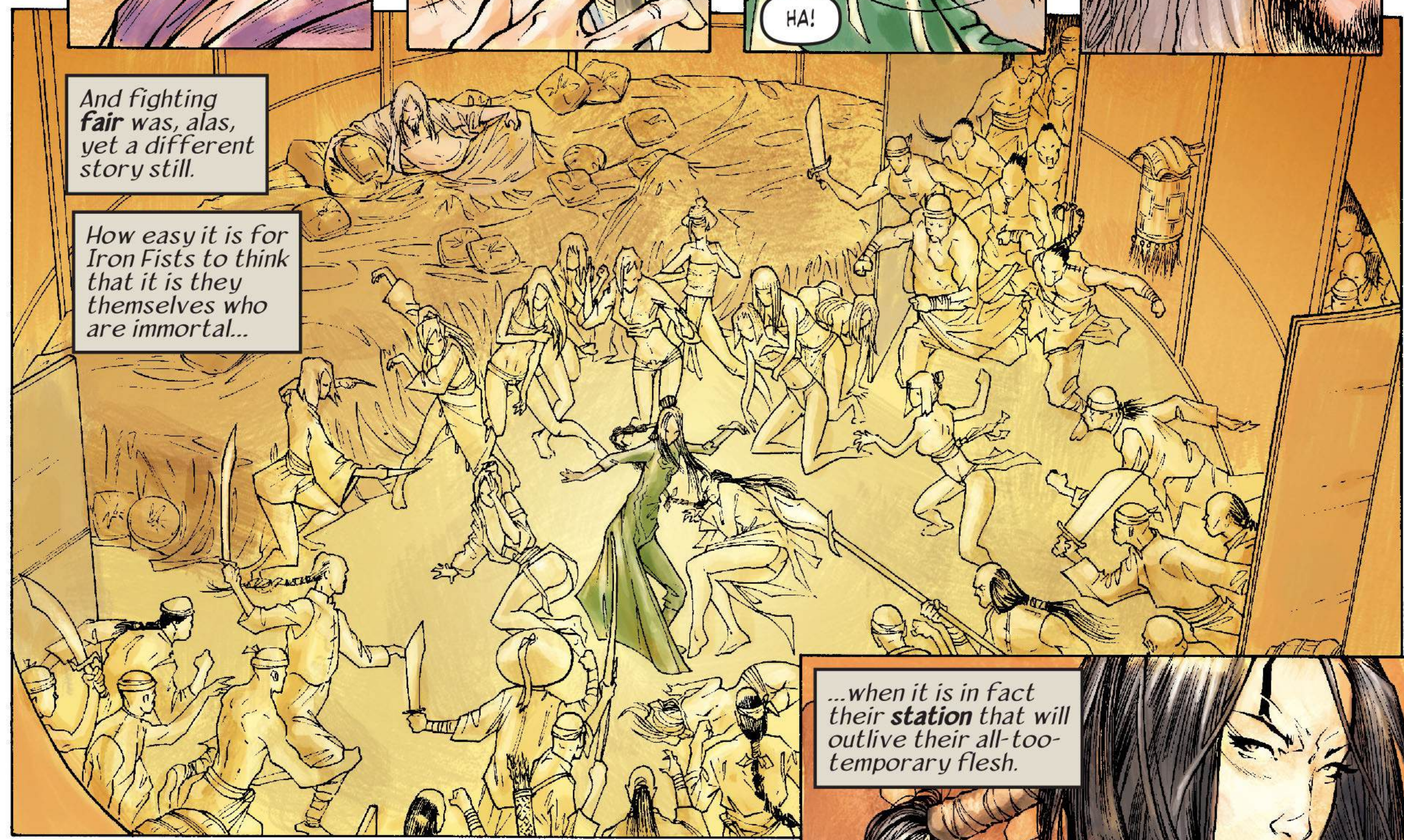
HA!



MEN!
STOP HER!

And fighting fair was, alas, yet a different story still.

How easy it is for Iron Fists to think that it is they themselves who are immortal...



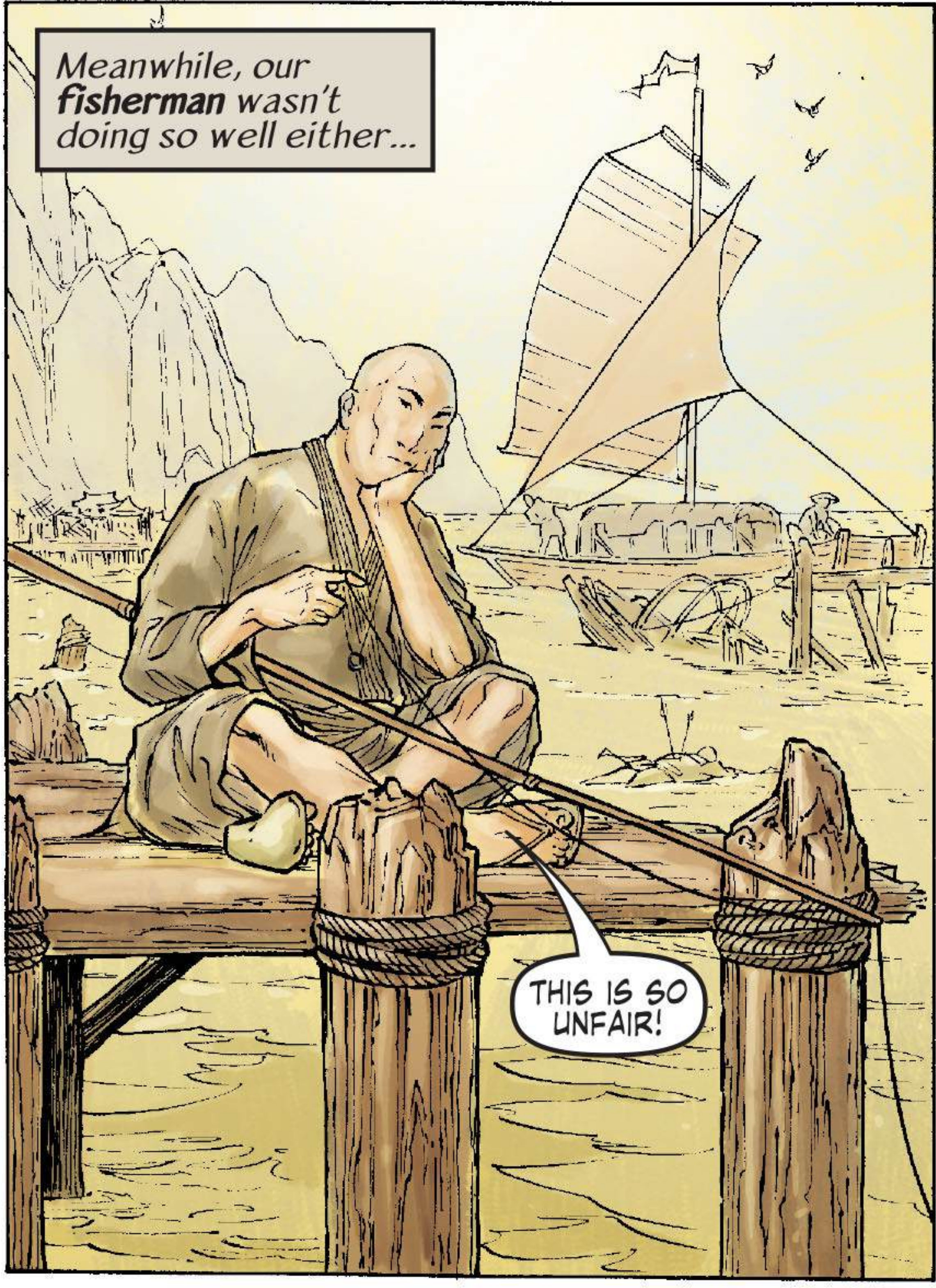
...when it is in fact their station that will outlive their all-too-temporary flesh.





Fair is **fair** and
this fight was
woefully **unfair**.

Even for an
Iron Fist.



Meanwhile, our
fisherman wasn't
doing so well either...

THIS IS SO
UNFAIR!



OH MY
LORD.

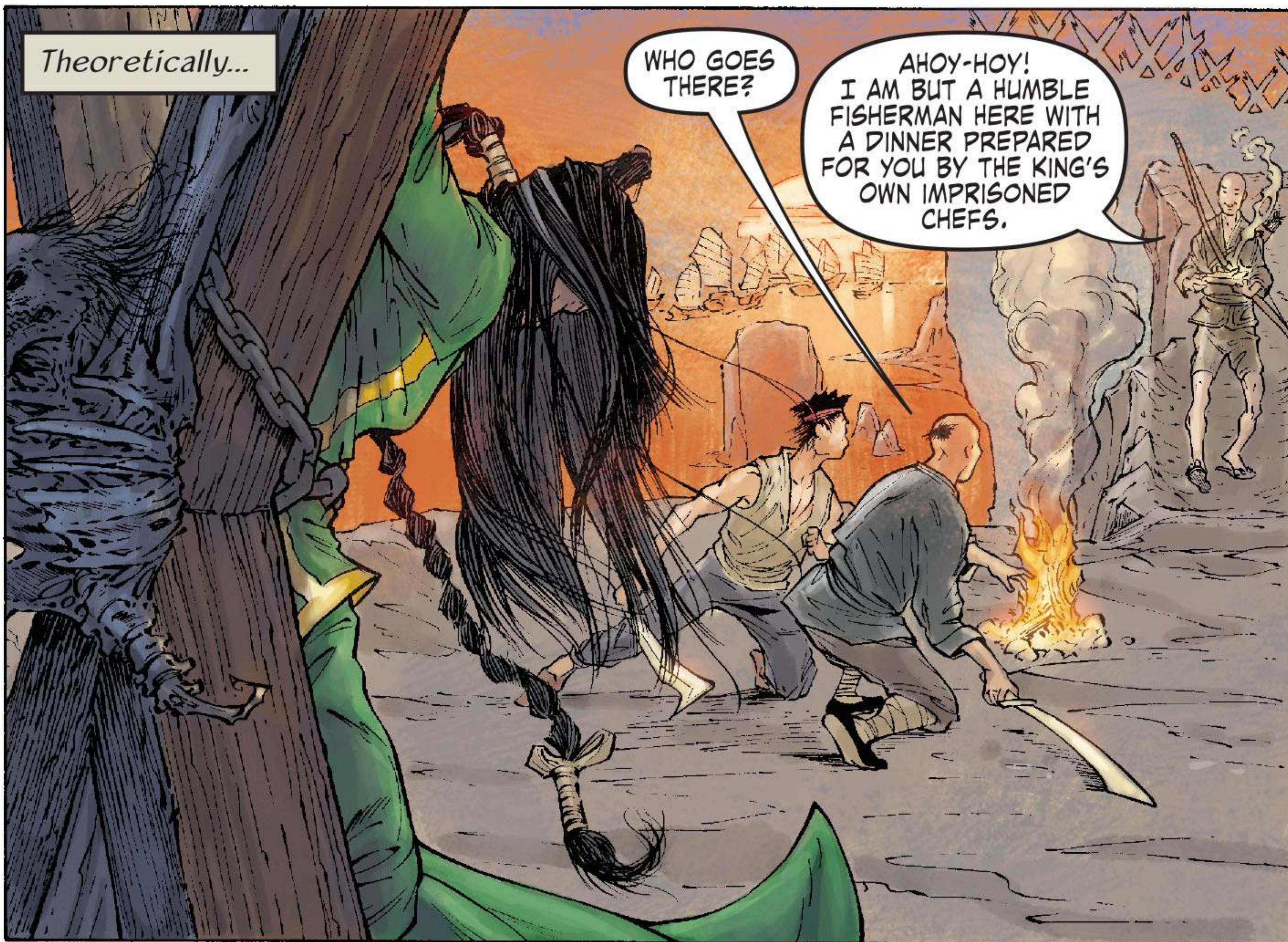


His love was being
led through the
streets, a prisoner.

And,
theoretically,
that would pretty
much be the end
of Wu Ao-Shi.

The Pirate King would
chain her to the cliffs
as his fleet set sail for
more plunder, leaving
her vulture-eaten bones
as a warning to others.





Theoretically...

WHO GOES THERE?

AHOY-HOY!
I AM BUT A HUMBLE FISHERMAN HERE WITH A DINNER PREPARED FOR YOU BY THE KING'S OWN IMPRISONED CHEFS.



Hearing his voice again, Wu wondered:

AM I DEAD?



GOORRRRRKK

HHUUURRRGG

BELOVED!

IMPOSSIBLE--
I LIVE?

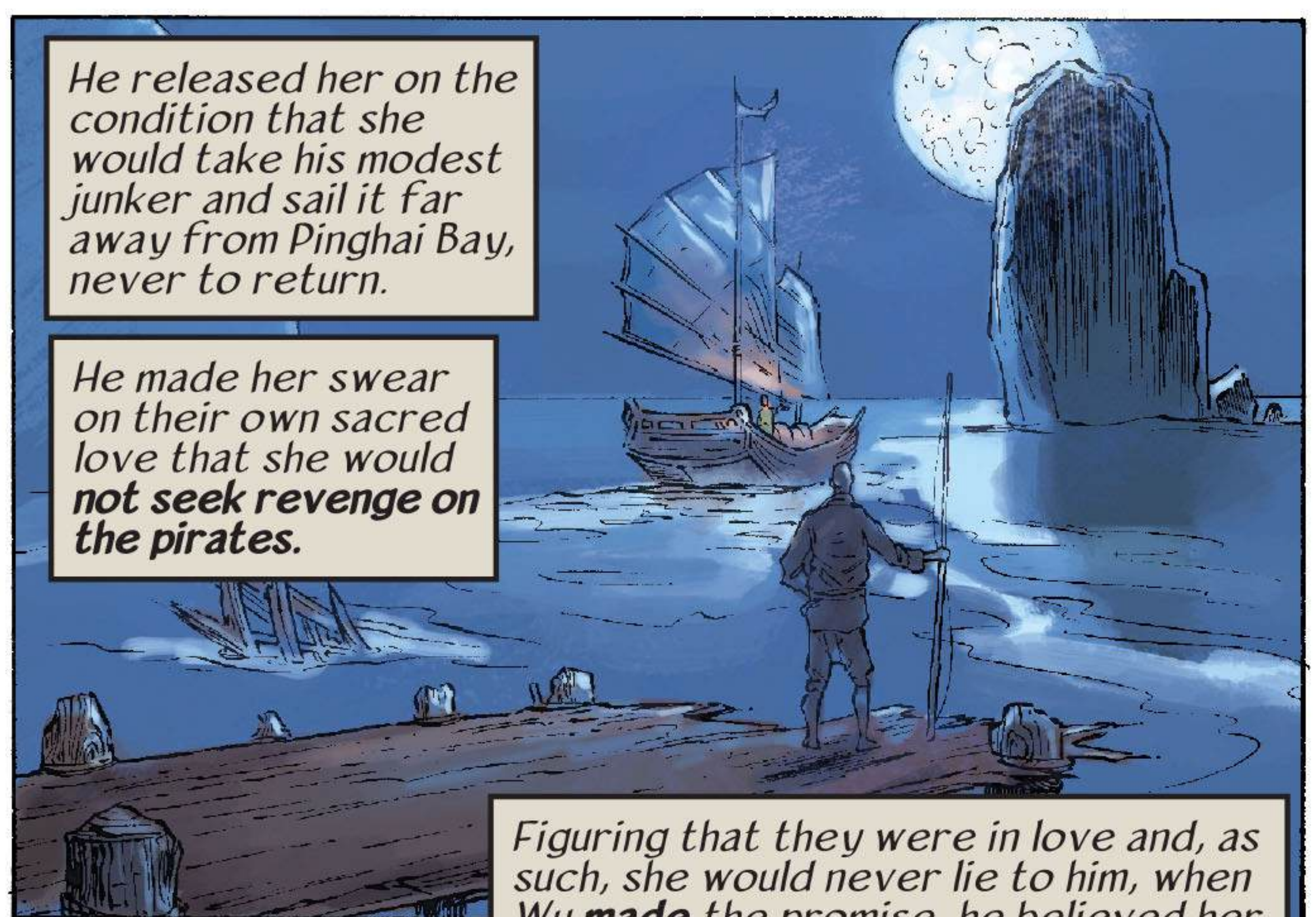


POISONED FISH! HA HA!

UNCHAIN ME.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU CAME ALL THE WAY TO PINGHAI TO--

I NEED A BOAT.



He released her on the condition that she would take his modest junker and sail it far away from Pinghai Bay, never to return.

He made her swear on their own sacred love that she would **not seek revenge on the pirates.**

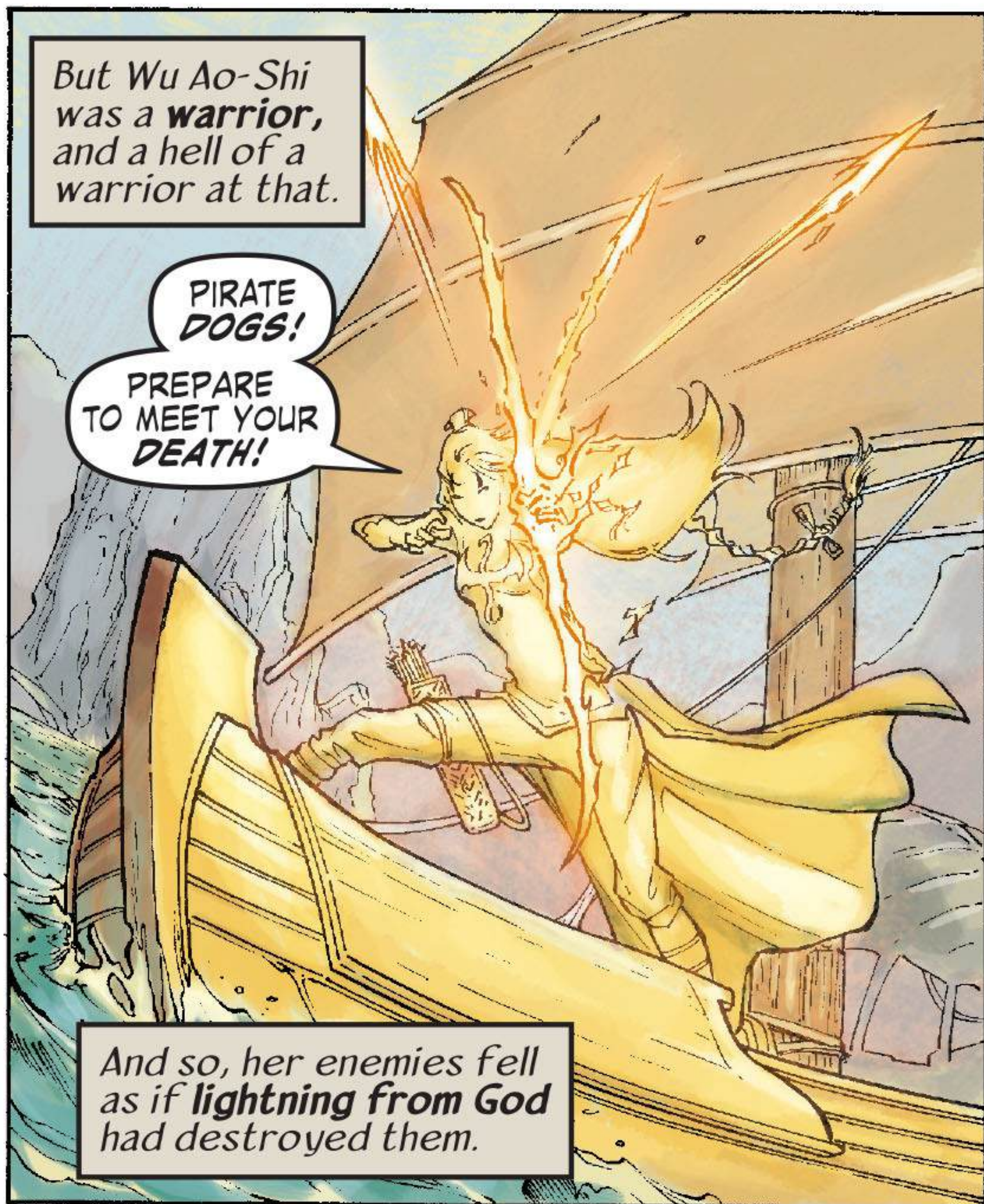
Figuring that they were in love and, as such, she would never lie to him, when Wu **made** the promise, he believed her.



This lasted about fifteen minutes.

I BET SHE LIED TO ME.

He was just a fisherman, after all, and not much of a **thinker.**



But Wu Ao-Shi was a **warrior**, and a hell of a warrior at that.

PIRATE DOGS!

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR DEATH!

And so, her enemies fell as if **lightning from God** had destroyed them.



It was **glorious**.



KILL HER!

KILL HER RIGHT NOW!

SHE'S ONLY A LITTLE GIRL! HOW HARD CAN IT BE TO KILL A LITTLE GIRL?!



Pirates aren't much for **irony**, but Wu would later insist that be the Pirate King's **epitaph**.



How hard can it be to kill a little girl, Pirate King?

Very, very hard indeed.

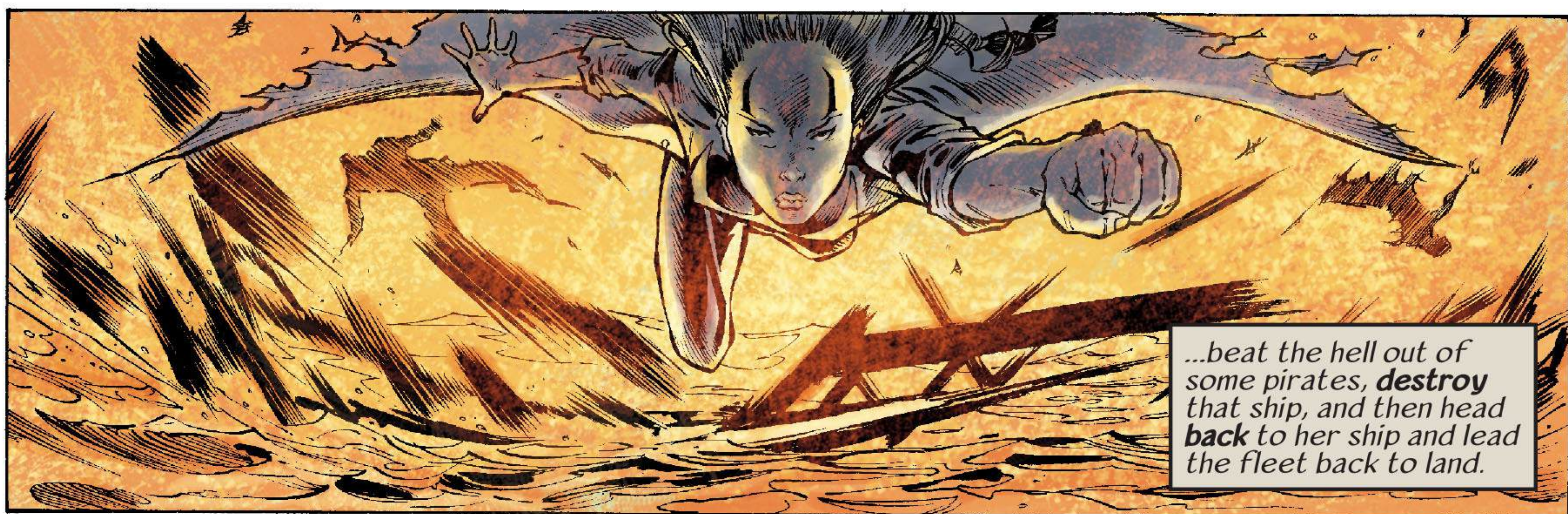
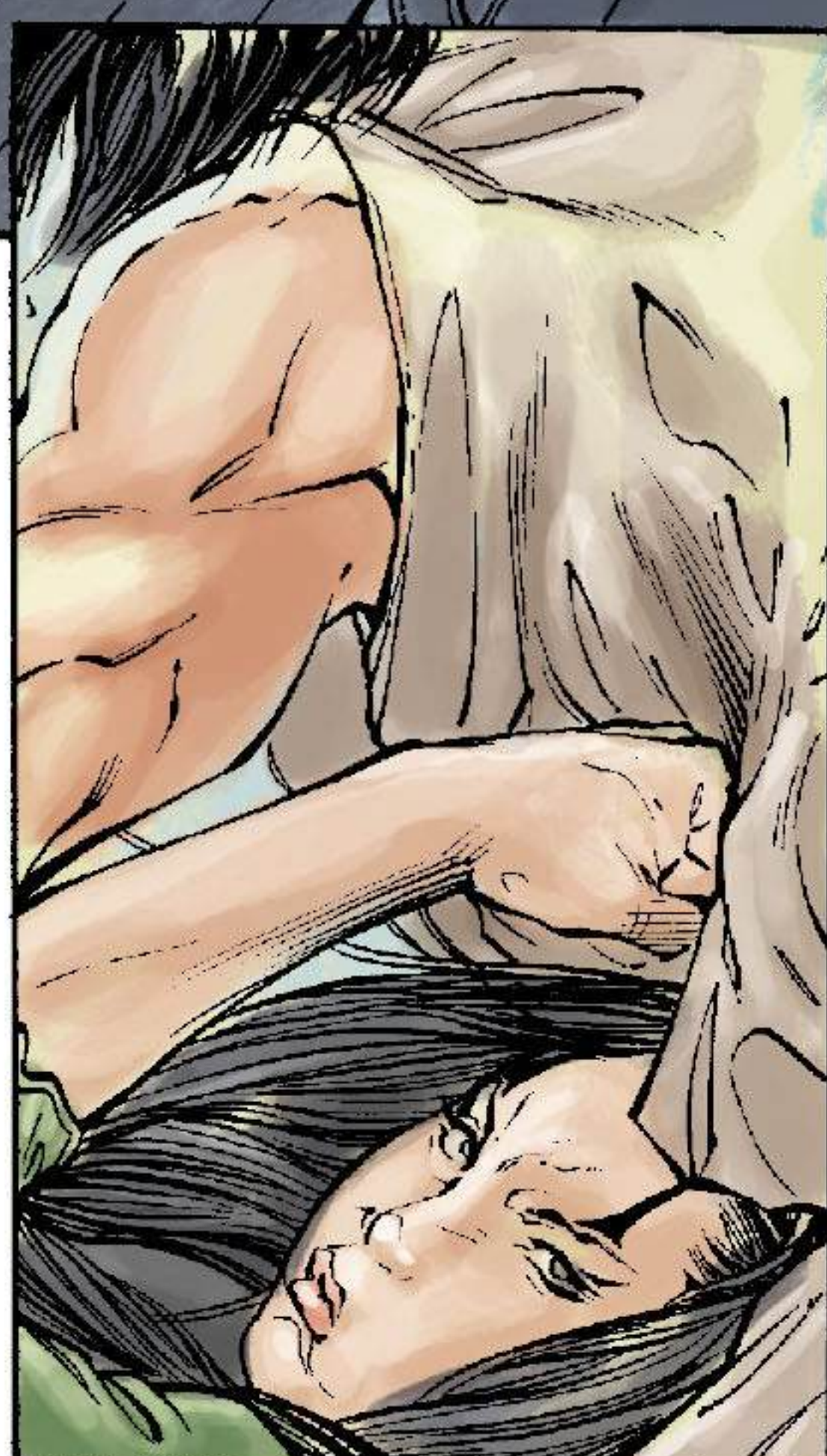
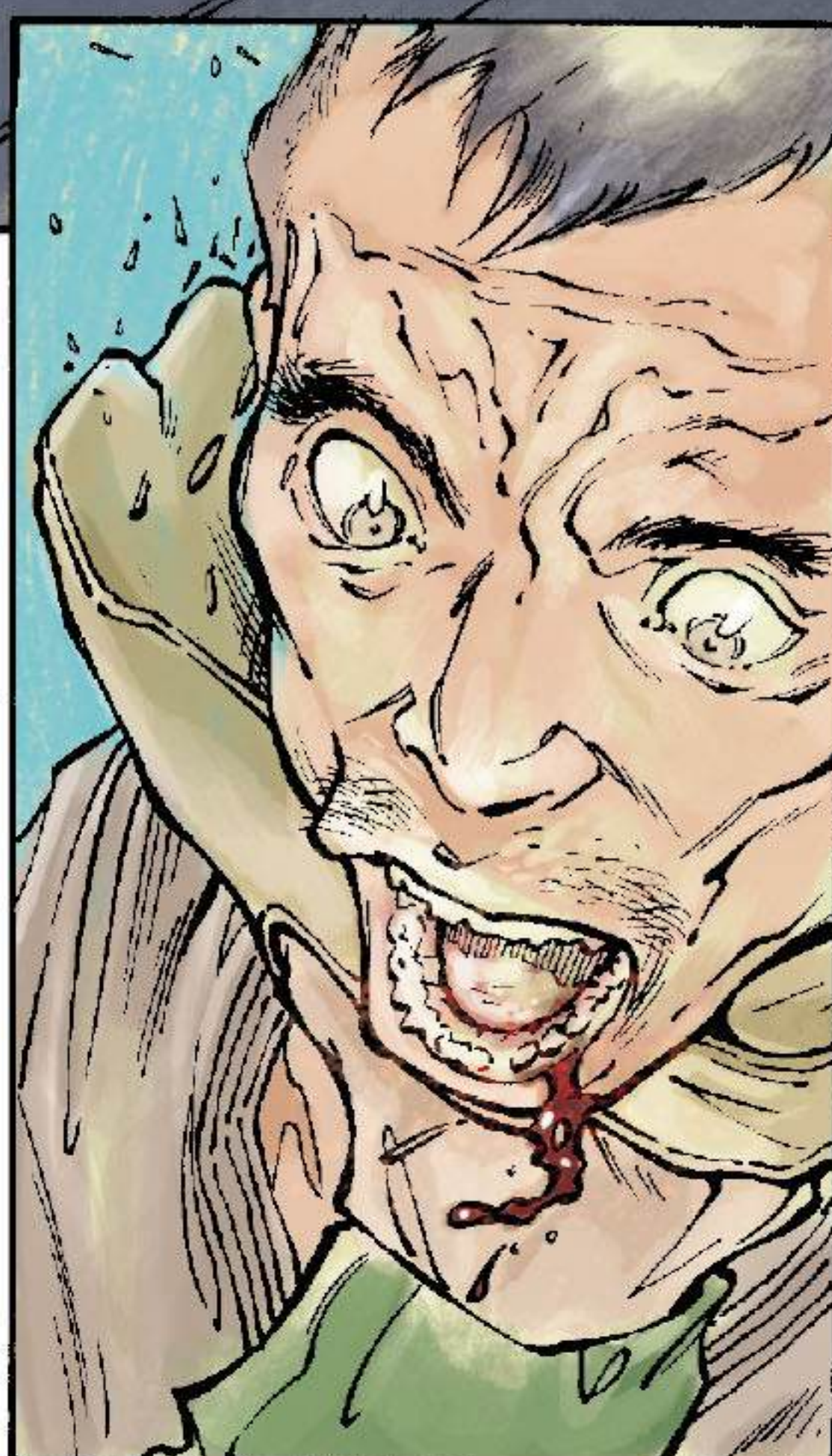


Especially when that little girl is the Immortal Iron Fist.



It continued this way for hours.

Wu would leap from her ship to one of theirs...



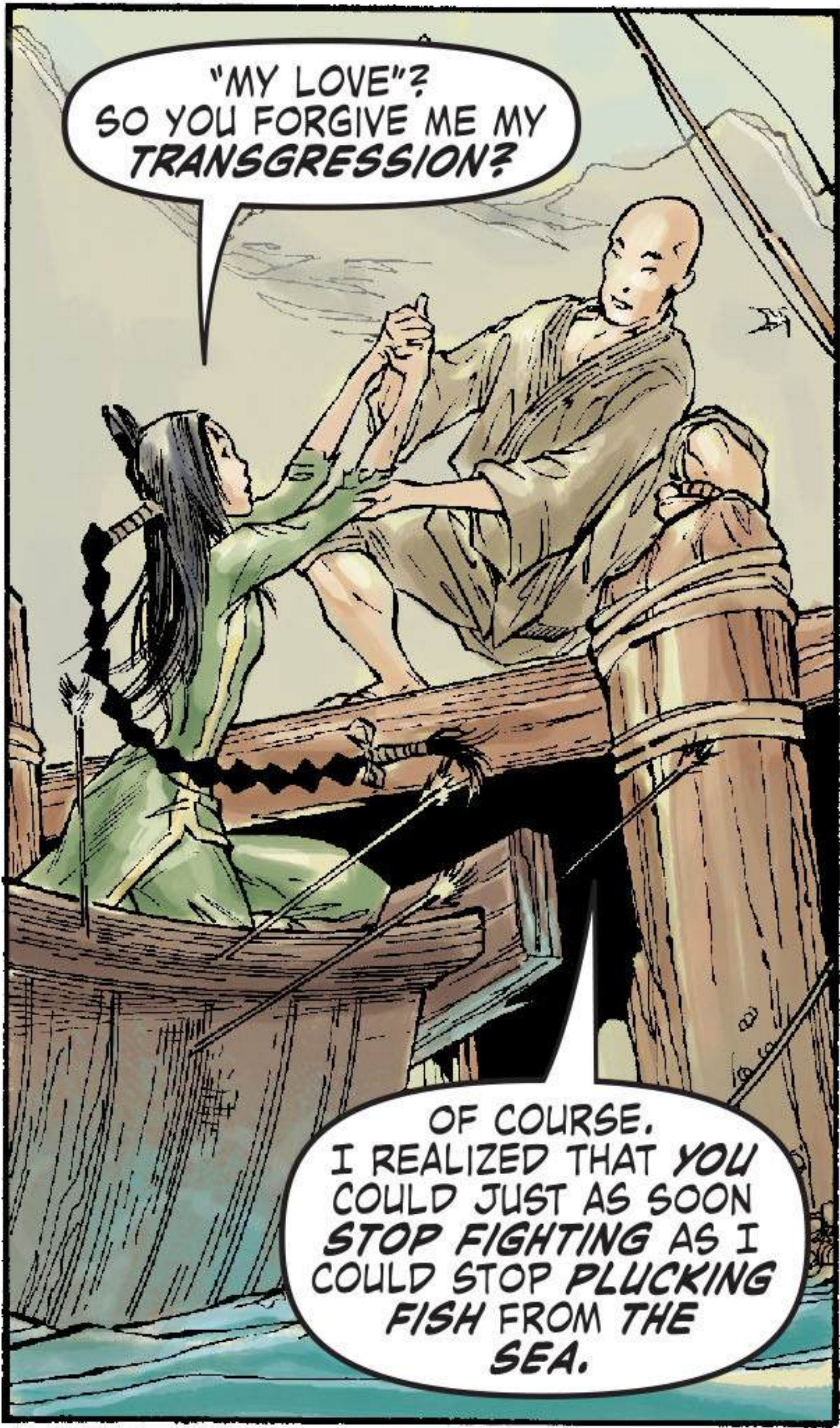
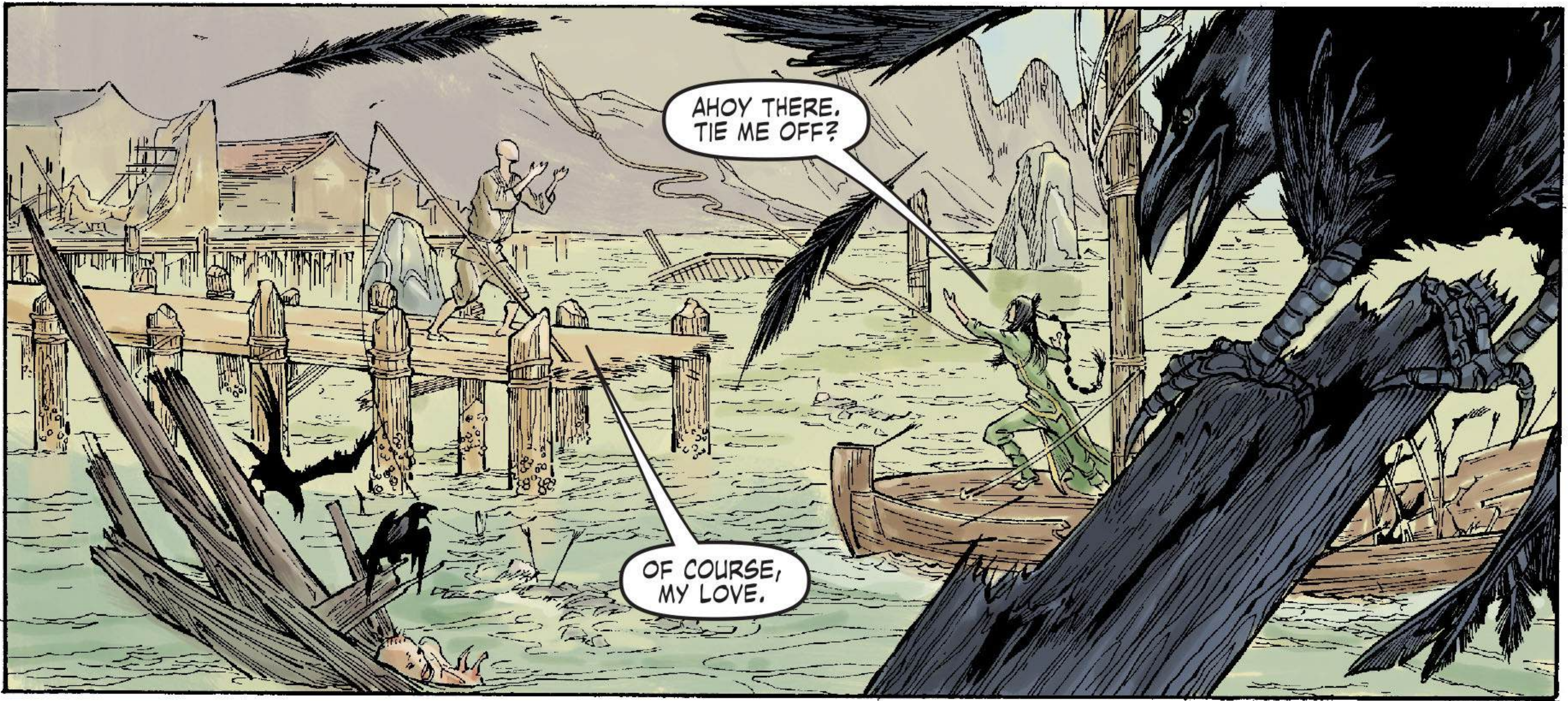
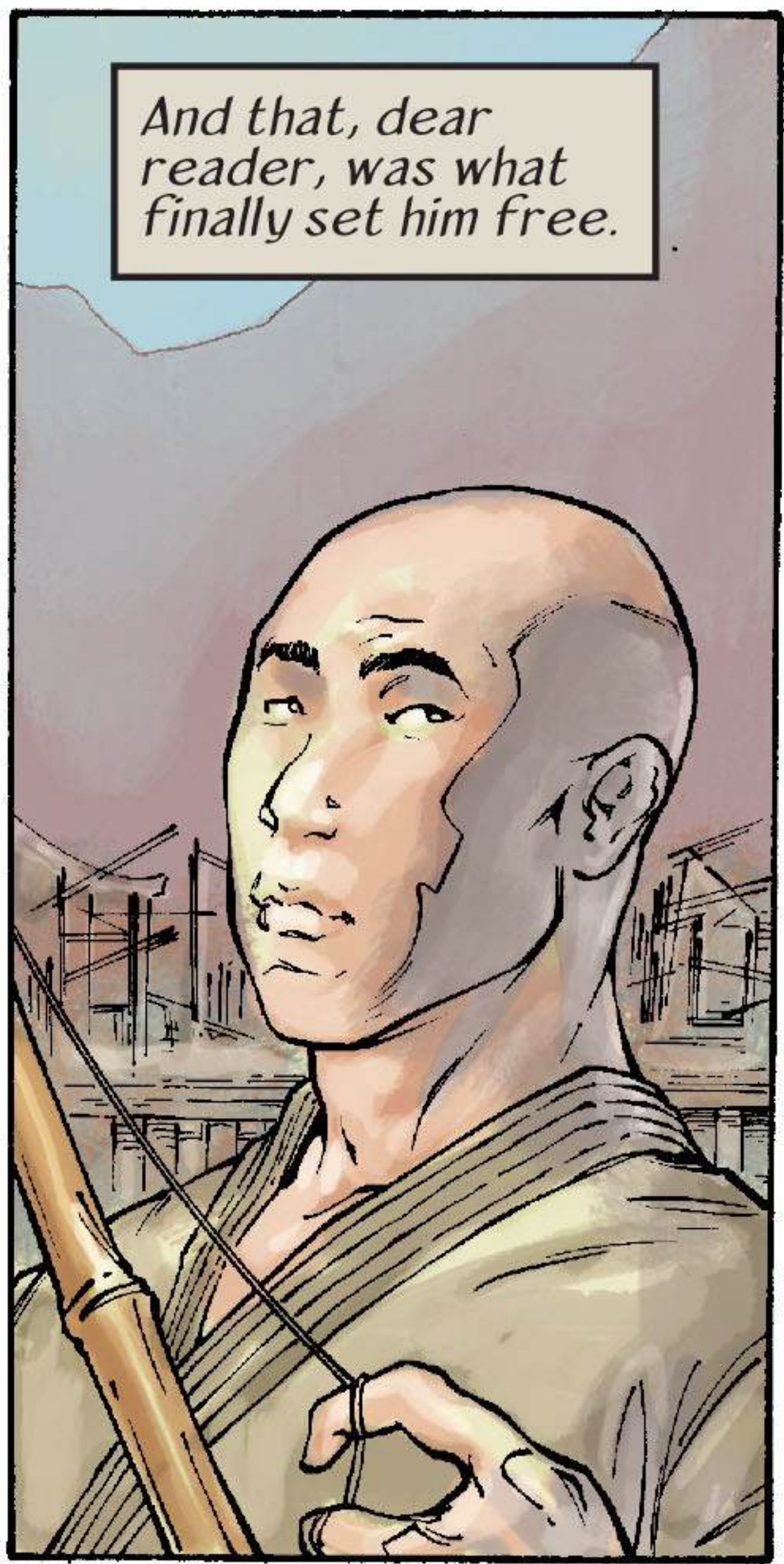
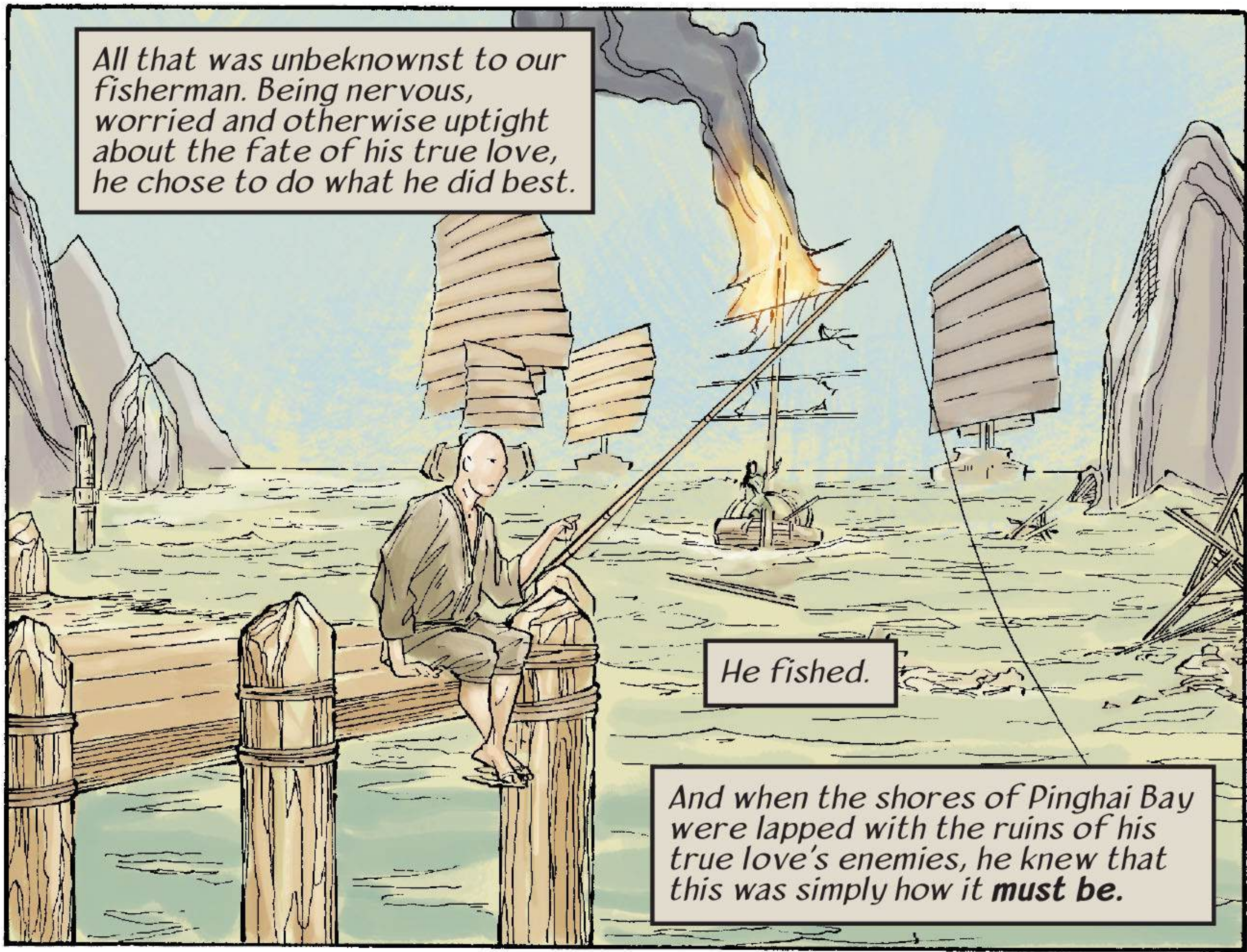
...beat the hell out of some pirates, **destroy** that ship, and then head **back** to her ship and lead the fleet back to land.



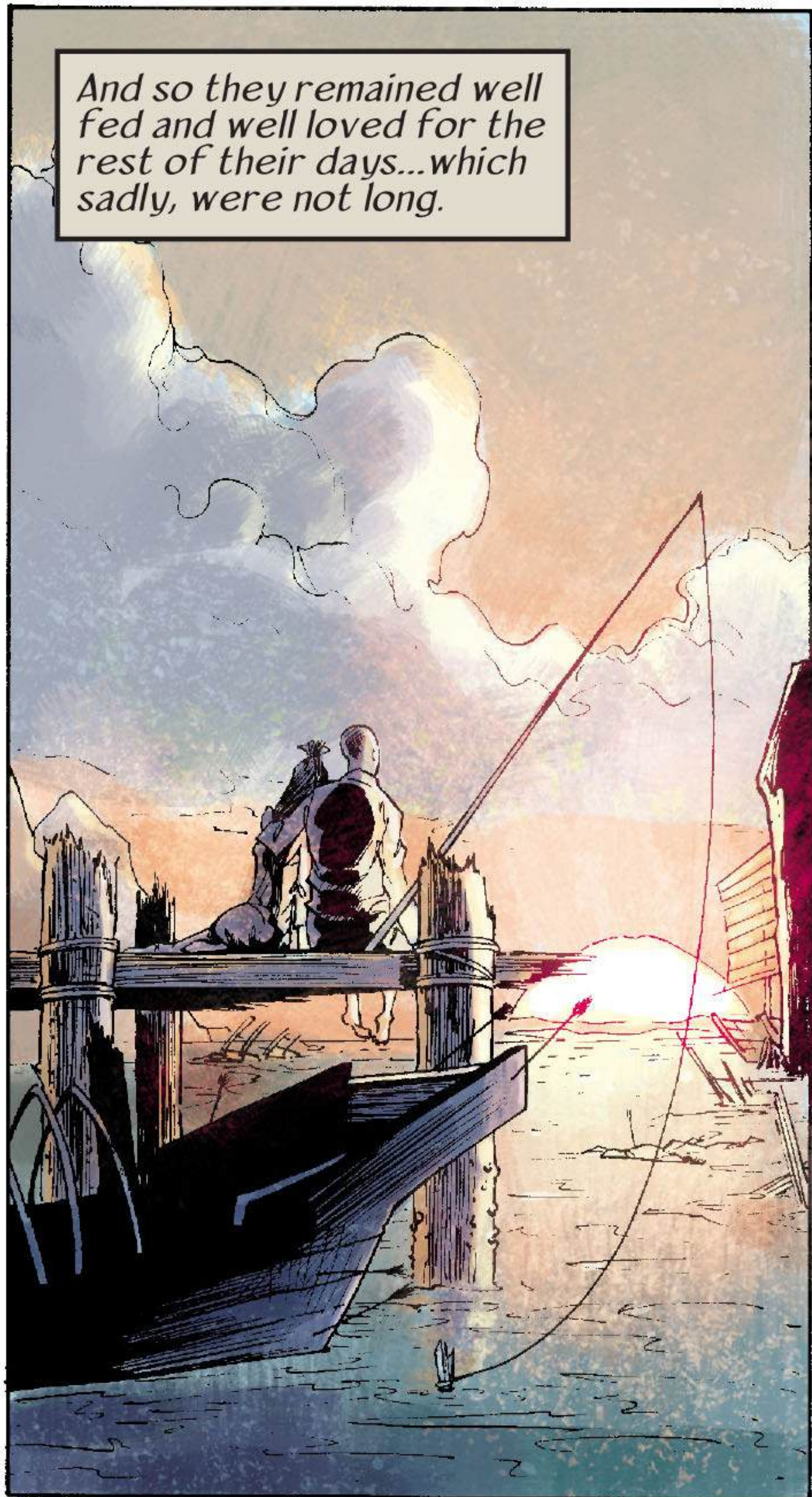
By the time they managed to set her junker on fire, it was too late.

She had led them too far inland and escape was impossible.

Pinghai Bay was now truly under her rule.



And so they remained well fed and well loved for the rest of their days...which sadly, were not long.



But while she lived, she was Wu Ao-Shi, the Pirate Queen of Pinghai Bay.

She ruled with benevolence, protecting **her people** from tyranny and oppression.



And she was the **last woman** ever to carry the mantle of the Iron Fist.



But the whys and the wherefores of **that** tale...

...are a story for **another** day.



THE END.

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FRACTION
EVANS
OLAZABA
MOUNTS
KEVIC DJURDJEVIC

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST



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matt

There have been sixty-six men and women to carry the mantle of THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST throughout the ages, men and women of great courage, valor, skill, and sacrifice. Sixty-six men and women have stood between man and the unstoppable forces of evil, willing to give all they have to hold back the hordes.

This is the story of one of them, as told in THE BOOK OF THE IRON FIST.

The Story of the Iron Fist Bei Bang-Wen (1827-1860)



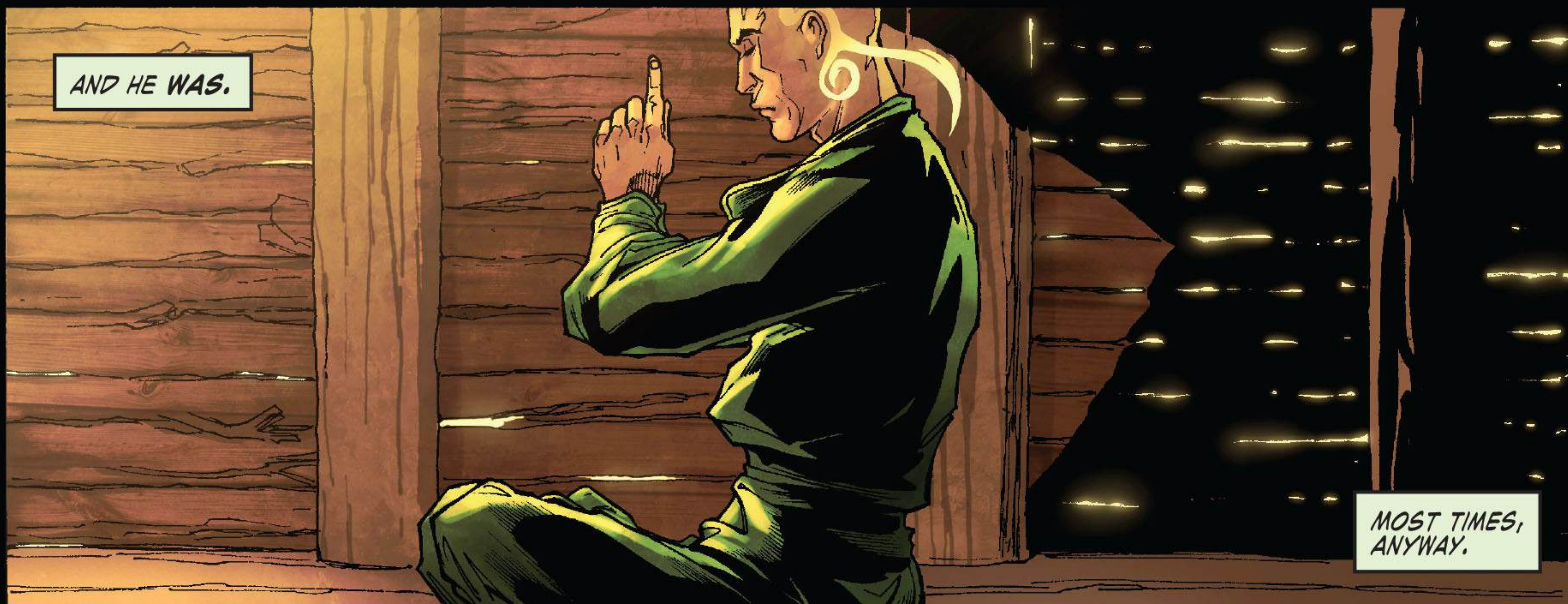
**The Perfect Strategy Mind and his Miraculous Travels to the Dark Continent,
and what Mysteries of the World and of the Self that He Learned There.**

**MATT FRACTION - WRITER
KHARI EVANS - PENCILER
VICTOR OLAZABA - INKER
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PAUL MOUNTS - COLOR ART
DAVE LANPHEAR - LETTERER
IRENE LEE - PRODUCTION
ALEJANDRO ARBONA - ASSISTANT EDITOR
WARREN SIMONS - EDITOR
JOE QUESADA - EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY - PUBLISHER**

EVEN IN HIS YOUTH, BEI BANG-WEN WAS USUALLY CONSIDERED THE SMARTEST PERSON IN THE ROOM.

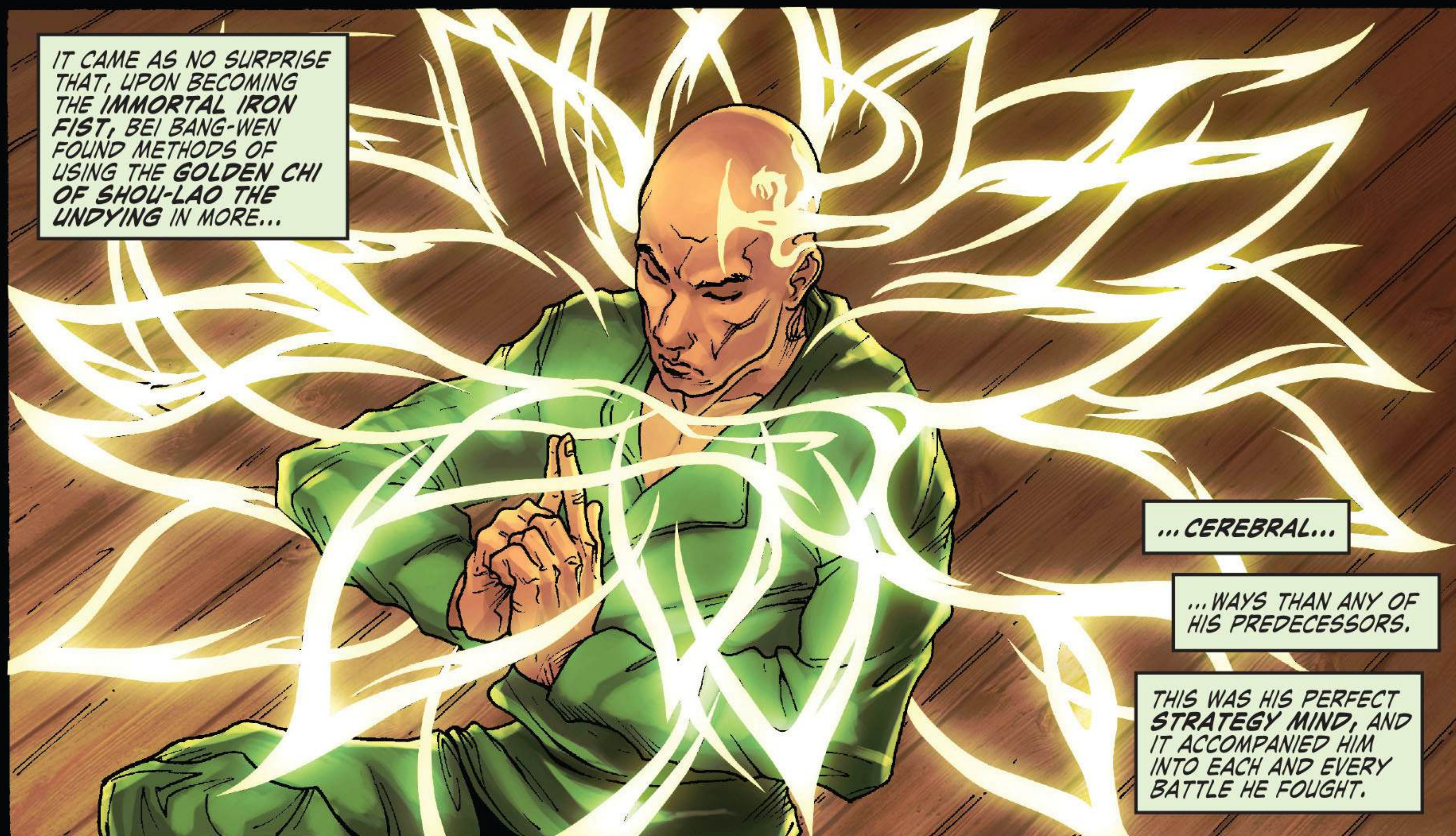


AND HE WAS.



MOST TIMES, ANYWAY.

IT CAME AS NO SURPRISE THAT, UPON BECOMING THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST, BEI BANG-WEN FOUND METHODS OF USING THE GOLDEN CHI OF SHOU-LAO THE UNDYING IN MORE...



... CEREBRAL...

... WAYS THAN ANY OF HIS PREDECESSORS.

THIS WAS HIS PERFECT STRATEGY MIND, AND IT ACCOMPANIED HIM INTO EACH AND EVERY BATTLE HE FOUGHT.

AT LAST IT HAS COME TO ME!

BATTLES ARE NOT HARD FOR HIM TO FIND. IT IS 1860, AND THE ENGLISH WANT THE CHINESE TO HONOR THE TRADING TREATIES OF 1858.

IT'S NOT GOING WELL.



THE RESULT WAS WHAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BE CALLED THE SECOND OPIUM WAR.

THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH NAVIES HAVE CAPTURED THE PORTS OF YANTAI AND DALIAN. THE BOHAI GULF IS SEALED OFF.

THIS WILL END BADLY FOR THE CHINESE. AND THAT ENDING BEGINS HERE...

Taku Forts. 21 August 1860.

THE PERFECT STRATEGY MIND HAS ORCHESTRATED AN ASSAULT OF 10,000 PIECES MOVING AT ONCE IN FLAWLESS HARMONY.

EVERY MAN ON THE FORT HAS BEEN CHOREOGRAPHED WITH PRECISION.

EVERY SOLDIER KNOWS DOWN TO THE HEARTBEAT WHEN TO FIRE, WHEN TO MOVE, AND WHEN TO RUN.

BEI BANG-WEN BELIEVES IN THE PERFECT STRATEGY MIND.

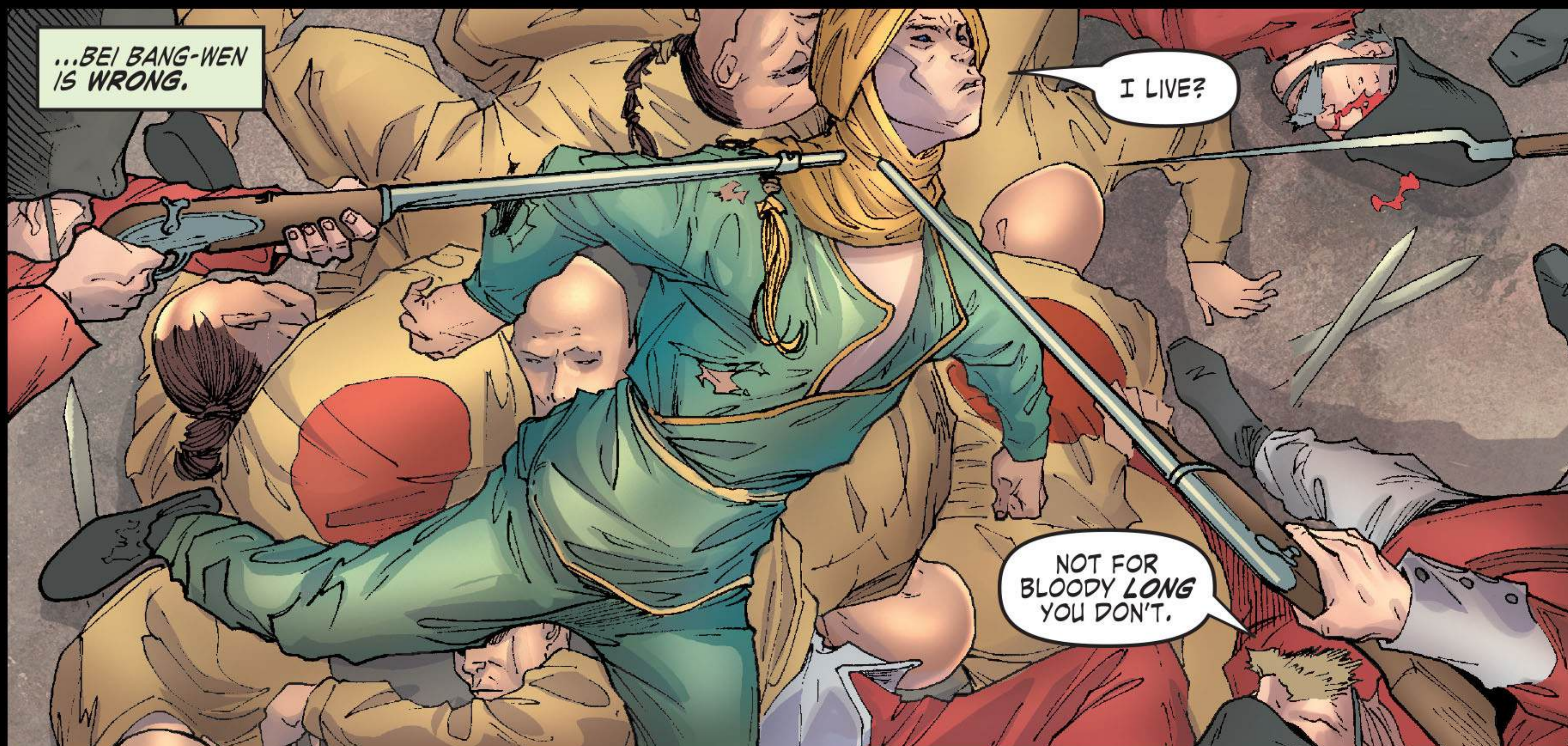
BEI BANG-WEN BELIEVES IN THE PERFECT DEATH.

ONE WITHOUT FEAR. ONE THAT STANDS AS AN IMMORTAL TRIBUTE TO A LIFE WELL-LIVED.

BEI BANG-WEN BELIEVES THAT THIS MOMENT--HERE ABOVE THE BLOOD AND MUCK THE TAKU FORTS ARE BUILT UPON-- IS THE MOMENT OF HIS DEATH.

BEI BANG-WEN IS READY.

BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE...



...BEI BANG-WEN
IS WRONG.

I LIVE?

NOT FOR
BLOODY **LONG**
YOU DON'T.



HOW COULD
THIS BE?

WAS THERE A FLAW IN THE PERFECT
STRATEGY MIND THAT BEI BANG-WEN
HAD ONLY NOW DISCOVERED?



HAD THE BRITISH OR THE
FRENCH COUNTERED HIS
MOST HOLY WEAPON?

HAD HE BEEN BETRAYED BY SOMEONE ON
HIS SIDE, HAD THERE BEEN A TRAITOR THAT
SOMEHOW CAUSED HIM TO MISCALCULATE?



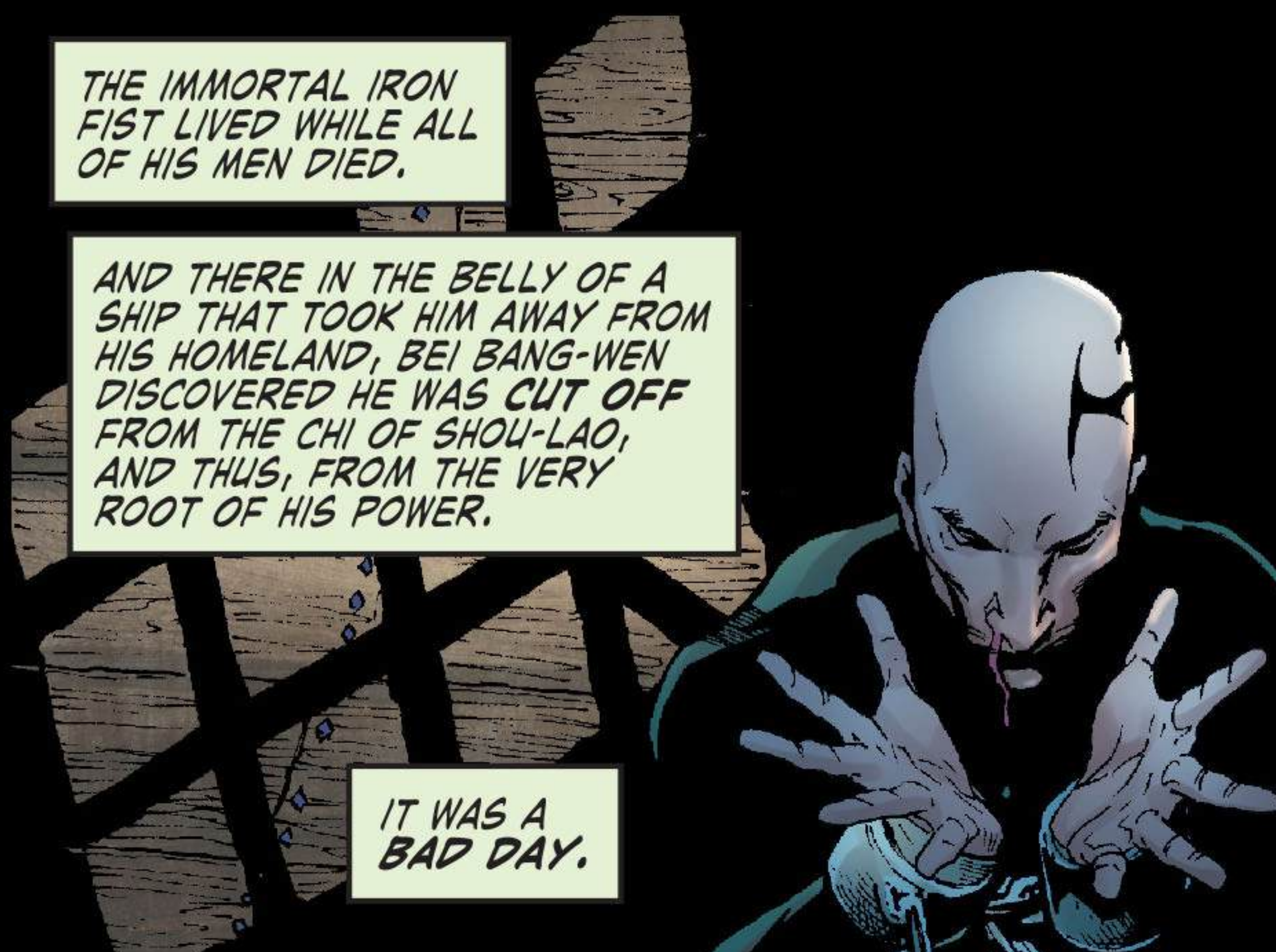
OF COURSE
NOT.

HE HAD
MERELY
FAILED.

THE IMMORTAL IRON
FIST LIVED WHILE ALL
OF HIS MEN DIED.

AND THERE IN THE BELLY OF A
SHIP THAT TOOK HIM AWAY FROM
HIS HOMELAND, BEI BANG-WEN
DISCOVERED HE WAS CUT OFF
FROM THE CHI OF SHOU-LAO,
AND THUS, FROM THE VERY
ROOT OF HIS POWER.

IT WAS A
BAD DAY.



Chapra jail, Bihar, India.

IT WOULD BE THE FIRST OF MANY.



BEI BANG-WEN WAS STRIPPED OF HIS NAME AND HIS NATIONALITY.

HE WAS STRIPPED OF HIS FREEDOMS AND HIS INDIVIDUALITY.



HE WAS BEATEN.

PROFOUNDLY AND REGULARLY, HE WAS BEATEN.



HE NEVER ONCE CURSED HIS LUCK, HIS JAILERS, OR HIS GOD.

HE NEVER ONCE ASKED "WHY ME?" HE NEVER PRAYED FOR DELIVERANCE, REVENGE, OR FORGIVENESS.



HE REPEATED TO HIMSELF, TIME AND TIME AGAIN, LIKE A MANTRA:

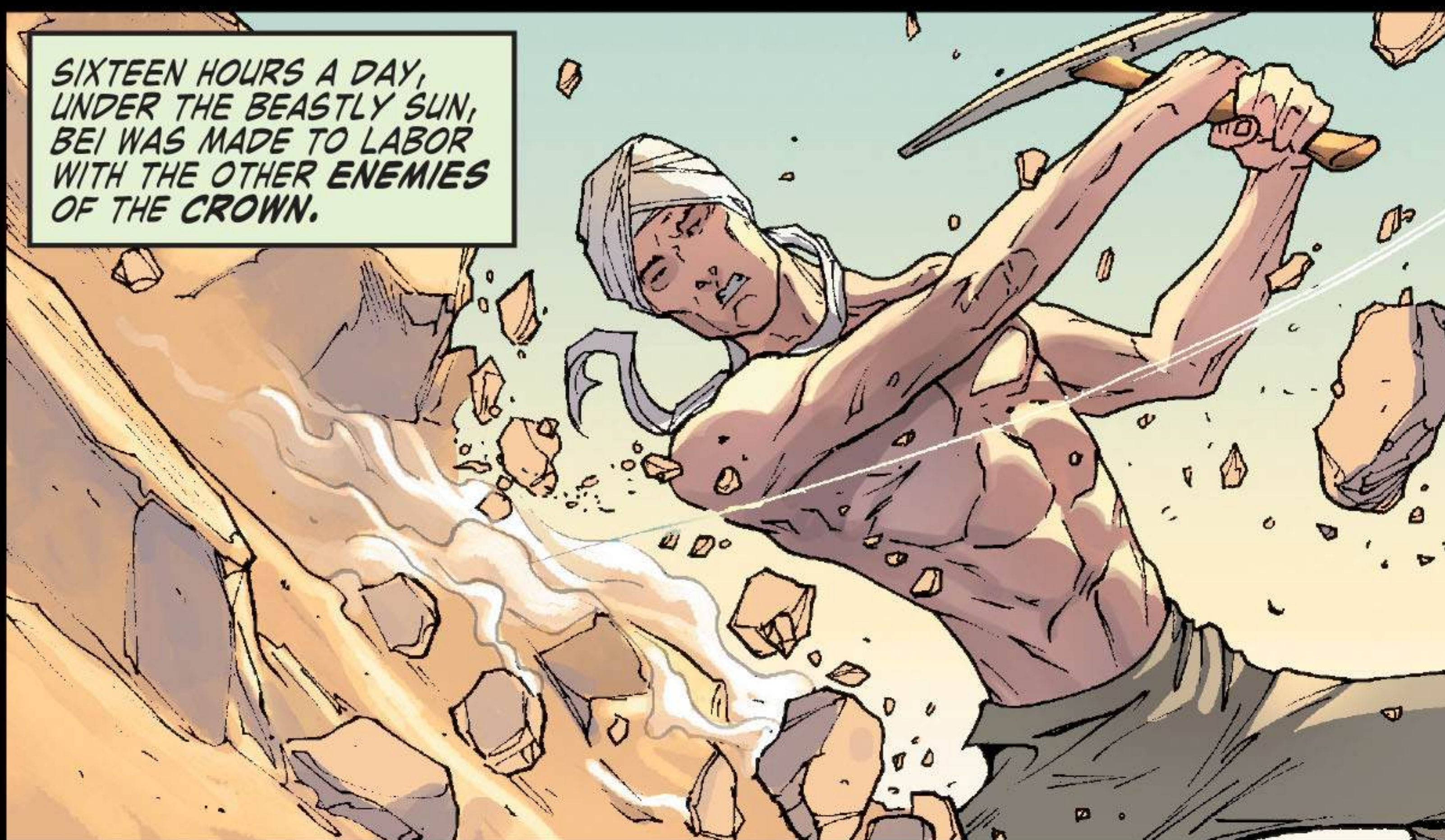
"I DESERVE WORSE."

OI, ON YOUR FEET, PRISONER.

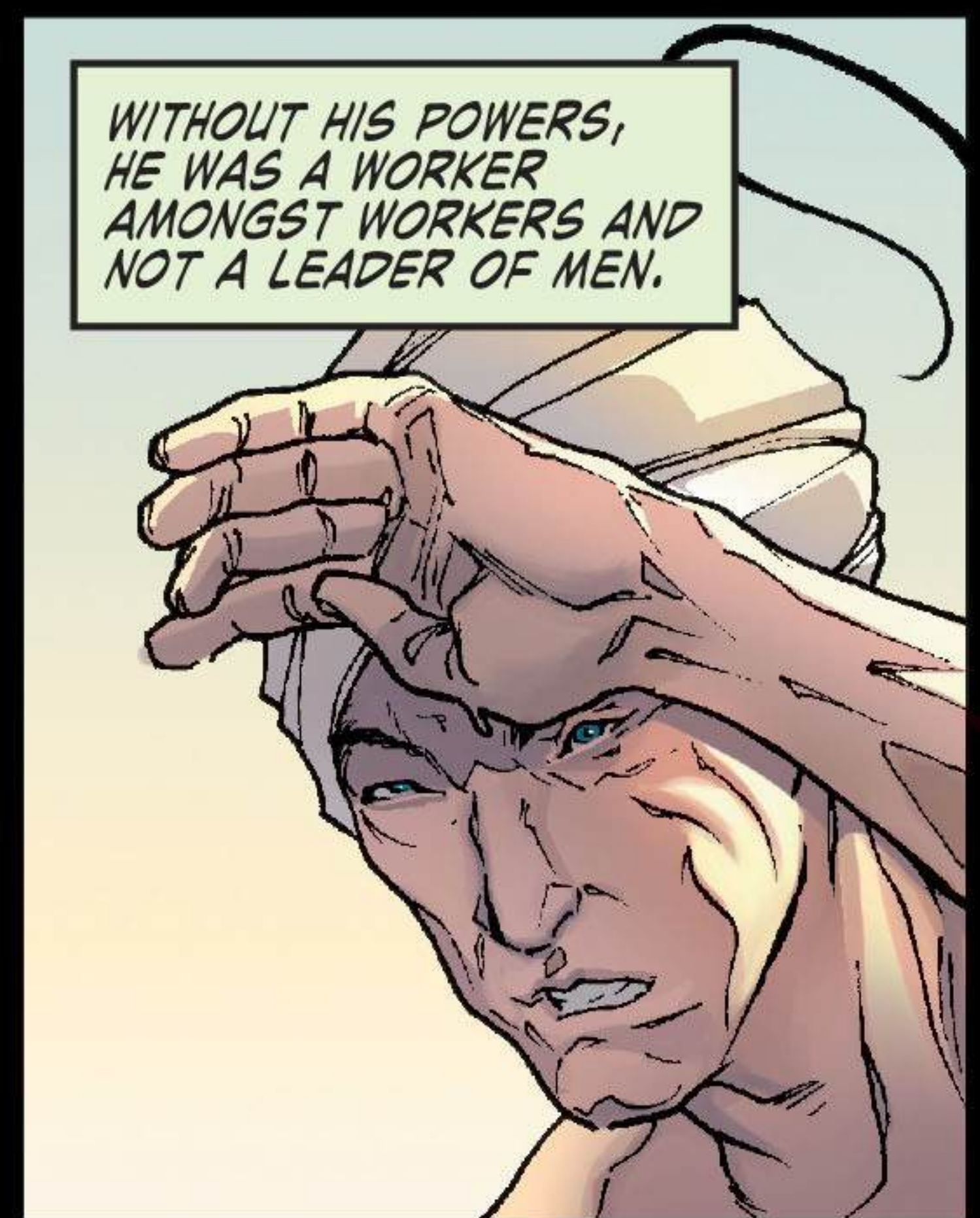


"WORSE" WAS
YET TO COME.

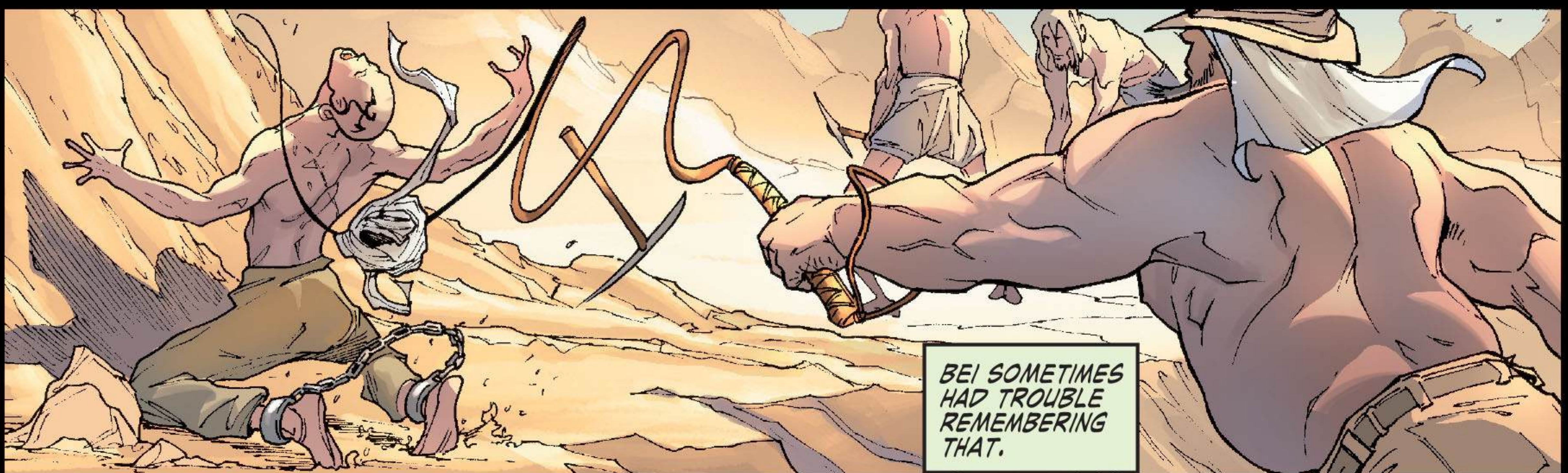
THIS WAS THE DAY BEI
WAS INTRODUCED INTO
THE LABOR GANG.



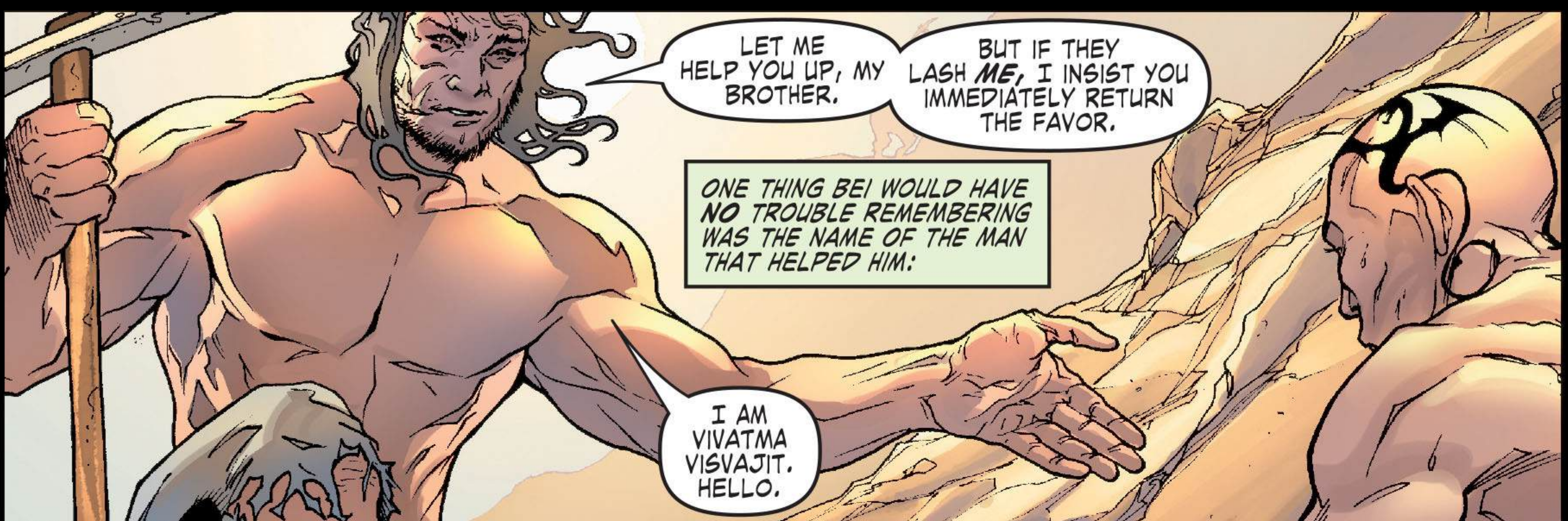
SIXTEEN HOURS A DAY,
UNDER THE BEASTLY SUN,
BEI WAS MADE TO LABOR
WITH THE OTHER ENEMIES
OF THE CROWN.



WITHOUT HIS POWERS,
HE WAS A WORKER
AMONGST WORKERS AND
NOT A LEADER OF MEN.



BEI SOMETIMES
HAD TROUBLE
REMEMBERING
THAT.

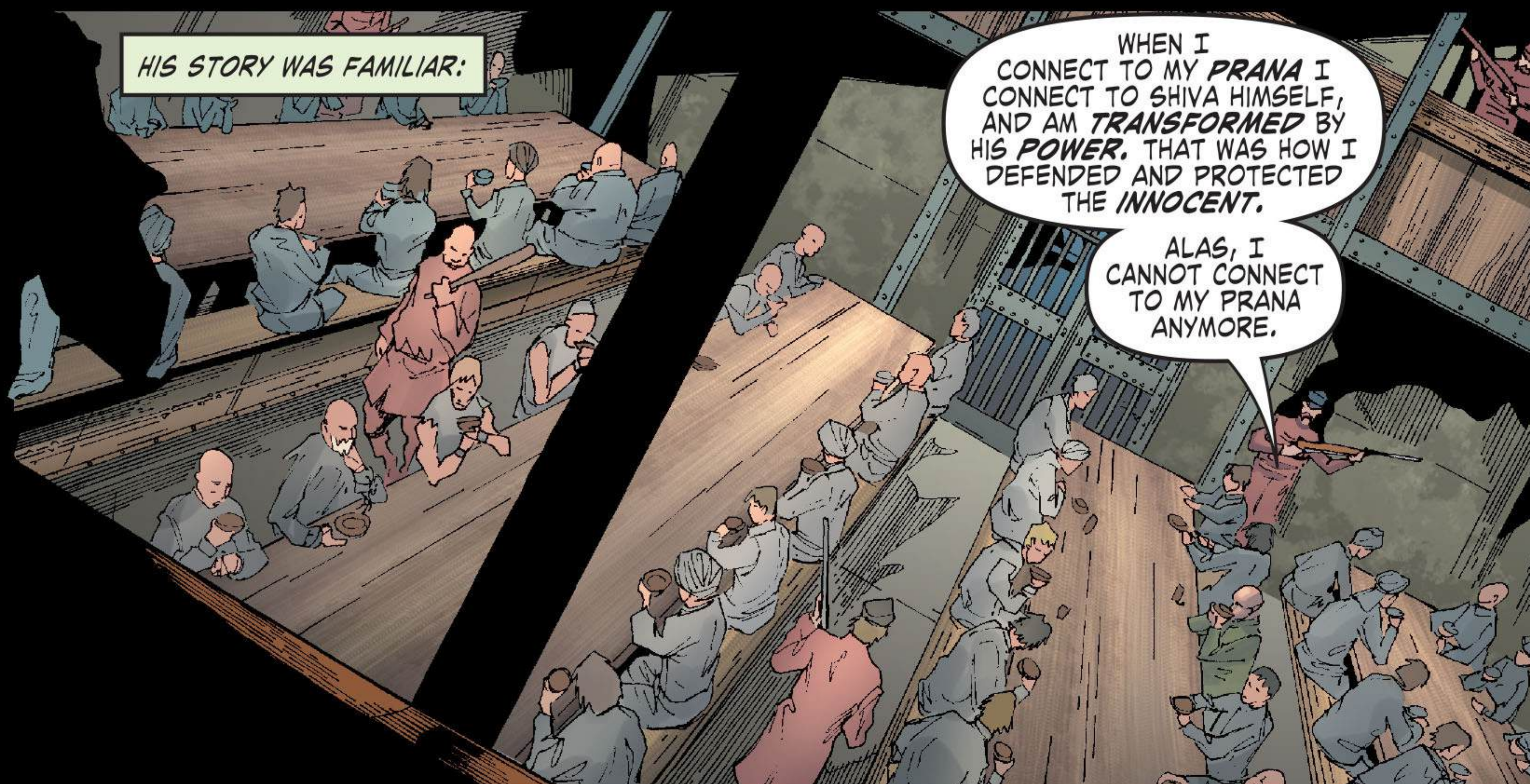


LET ME
HELP YOU UP, MY
BROTHER.

BUT IF THEY
LASH *ME*, I INSIST YOU
IMMEDIATELY RETURN
THE FAVOR.

ONE THING BEI WOULD HAVE
NO TROUBLE REMEMBERING
WAS THE NAME OF THE MAN
THAT HELPED HIM:

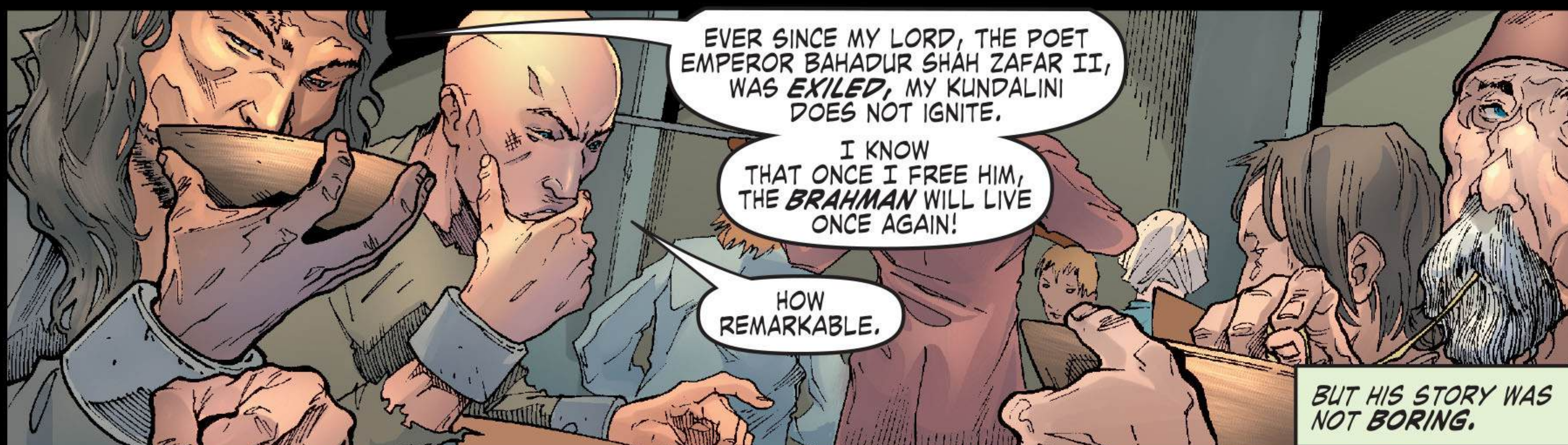
I AM
VIVATMA
VISVAJIT.
HELLO.



HIS STORY WAS FAMILIAR:

WHEN I
CONNECT TO MY **PRANA** I
CONNECT TO SHIVA HIMSELF,
AND AM **TRANSFORMED** BY
HIS **POWER**. THAT WAS HOW I
DEFENDED AND PROTECTED
THE **INNOCENT**.

ALAS, I
CANNOT CONNECT
TO MY PRANA
ANYMORE.



EVER SINCE MY LORD, THE POET
EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR II,
WAS **EXILED**, MY KUNDALINI
DOES NOT IGNITE.

I KNOW
THAT ONCE I FREE HIM,
THE **BRAHMAN** WILL LIVE
ONCE AGAIN!

HOW
REMARKABLE.

BUT HIS STORY WAS
NOT **BORING**.



BEI TOLD HIS STORY AND THE
TWO MEN WERE STARTLED AT
THE SIMILARITIES.

TWO CHAMPIONS, EACH CUT
OFF FROM THE SOURCE OF
THEIR HOLY POWERS.

AND NOW BOTH
PRISONERS HAUNTED
BY DREAMS OF WHAT
ONCE WAS AND WHAT
MIGHT YET BE.

BEING THE SMARTEST PERSON IN
THE ROOM CAN BE A REAL **BURDEN**.
BEI WAS LIKE THAT SOMETIMES:
GRIM. OVERLY SERIOUS.

THE COINCIDENCE
CONVINCED THE GRIM
AND OVERLY SERIOUS
BEI OF MANY THINGS,
BUT LIGHTENING THAT
BURDEN WAS NOT
ONE OF THEM:

TAP
TAP

HE WOULD HELP VIVATMA LEAD
A REBELLION IN THE PRISON.

HE WOULD HELP
VIVATMA FLEE TO HIS
EXILED EMPEROR.

AND HE WOULD
FINALLY DIE.

BOTH BEI AND VIVATMA KNEW
SOMETHING FROM ALL THEIR YEARS
FIGHTING ON THE SIDE OF THE
OPPRESSED AND THE DEFENSELESS:



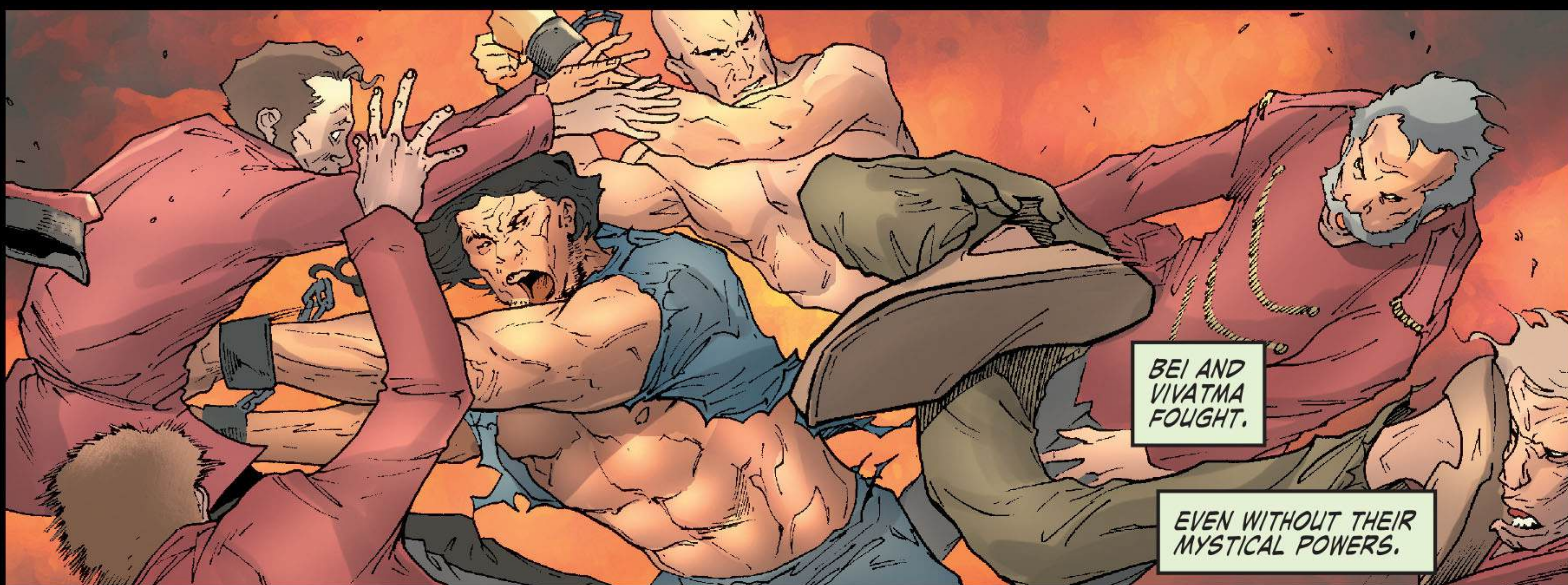
THAT, NO MATTER WHAT THE
POWER DIFFERENTIAL IS BETWEEN
RULERS AND THE RULED--

NO MATTER WHAT KIND
OF GUNS ARE USED
AGAINST PEASANTS--



THERE IS NO GREATER
DIFFERENTIAL THAN
RAW NUMBERS.

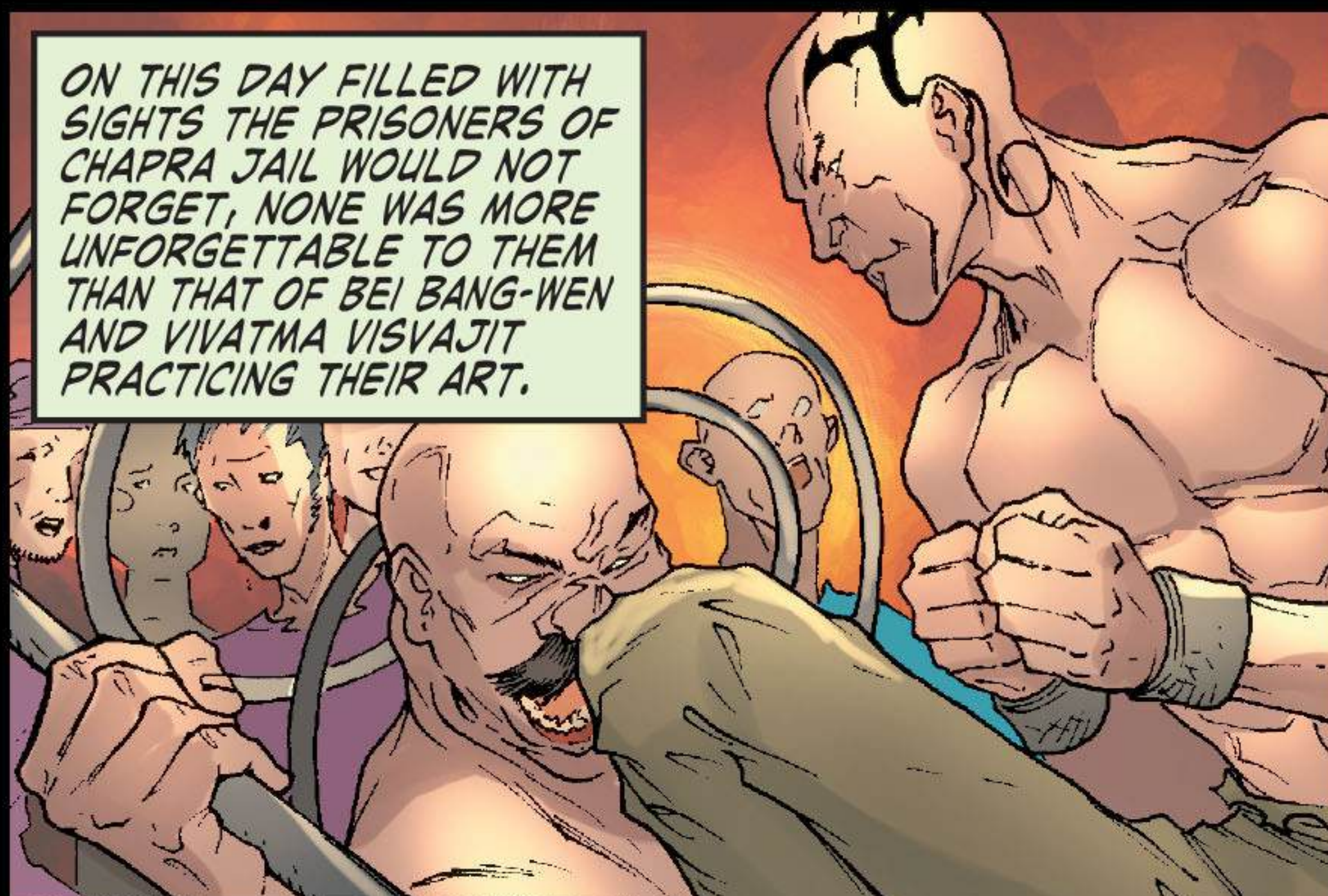
AND THERE WILL ALWAYS BE MORE
OF THE RULED THAN THEIR RULERS.



BEI AND
VIVATMA
FOUGHT.

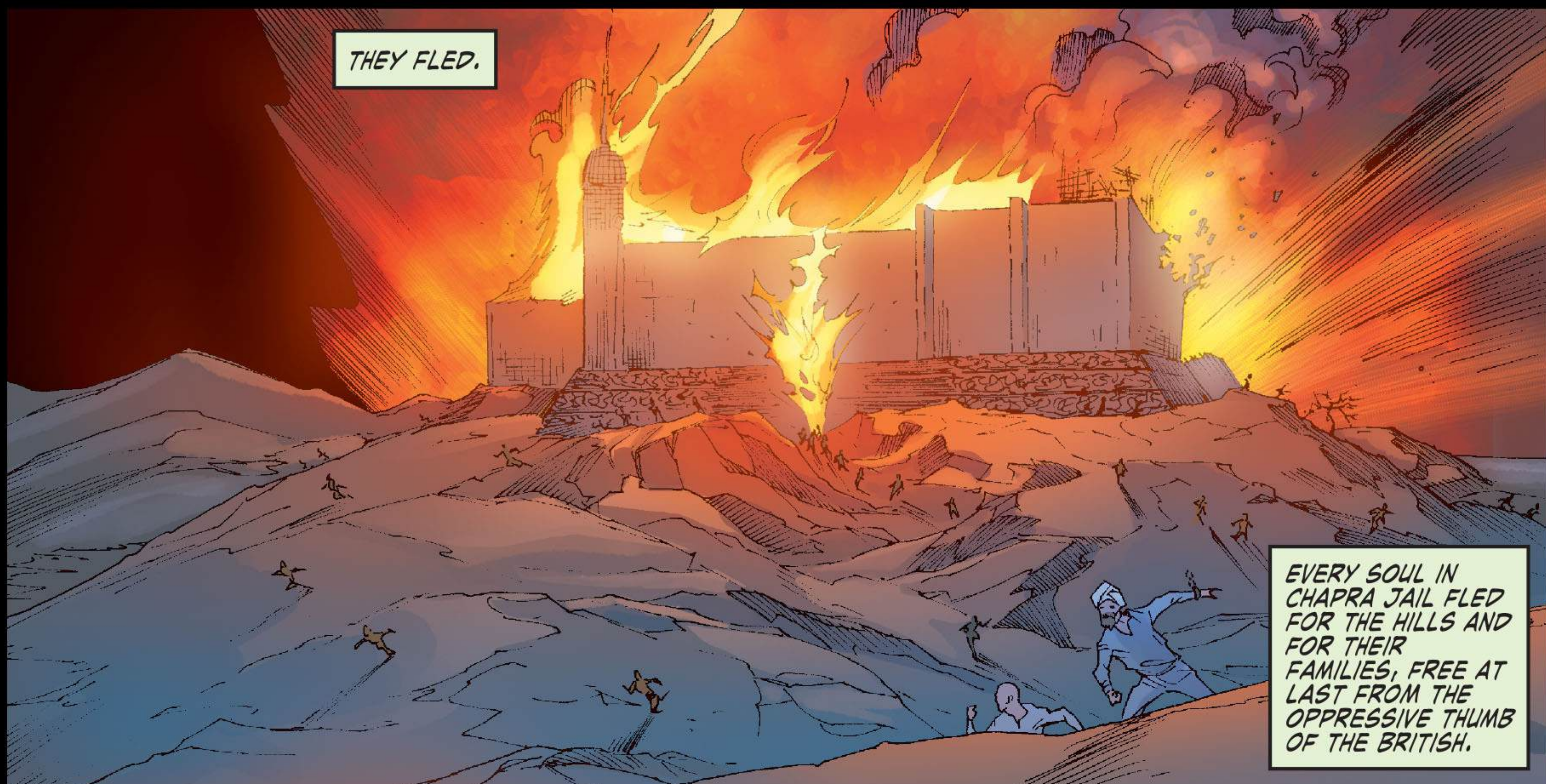
EVEN WITHOUT THEIR
MYSTICAL POWERS.

ON THIS DAY FILLED WITH
SIGHTS THE PRISONERS OF
CHAPRA JAIL WOULD NOT
FORGET, NONE WAS MORE
UNFORGETTABLE TO THEM
THAN THAT OF BEI BANG-WEN
AND VIVATMA VISVAJIT
PRACTICING THEIR ART.



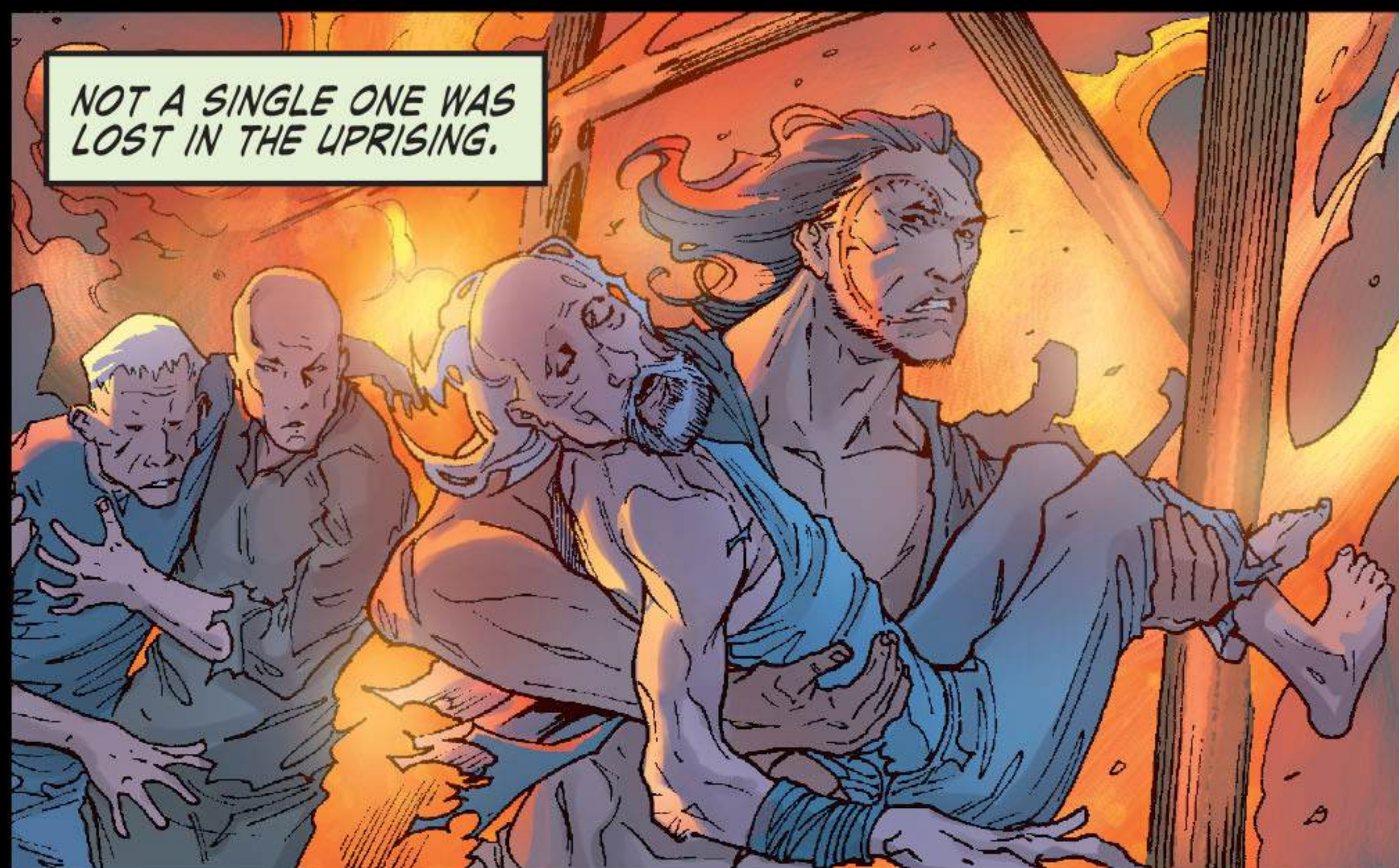
AND, BELIEVE ME, THEY
WERE BOTH ARTISTS
OF VIOLENCE.





THEY FLED.

EVERY SOUL IN CHAPRA JAIL FLED FOR THE HILLS AND FOR THEIR FAMILIES, FREE AT LAST FROM THE OPPRESSIVE THUMB OF THE BRITISH.



NOT A SINGLE ONE WAS LOST IN THE UPRISING.



AND THE TWO CHAMPIONS FLED, TOO, BUT RATHER THAN RUN TO THE HILLS OR TOWARD WHATEVER FAMILIES THEY MAY HAVE HAD--



--THEY RAN TO THE EASTERN SHORES, IN SEARCH OF A BOAT.

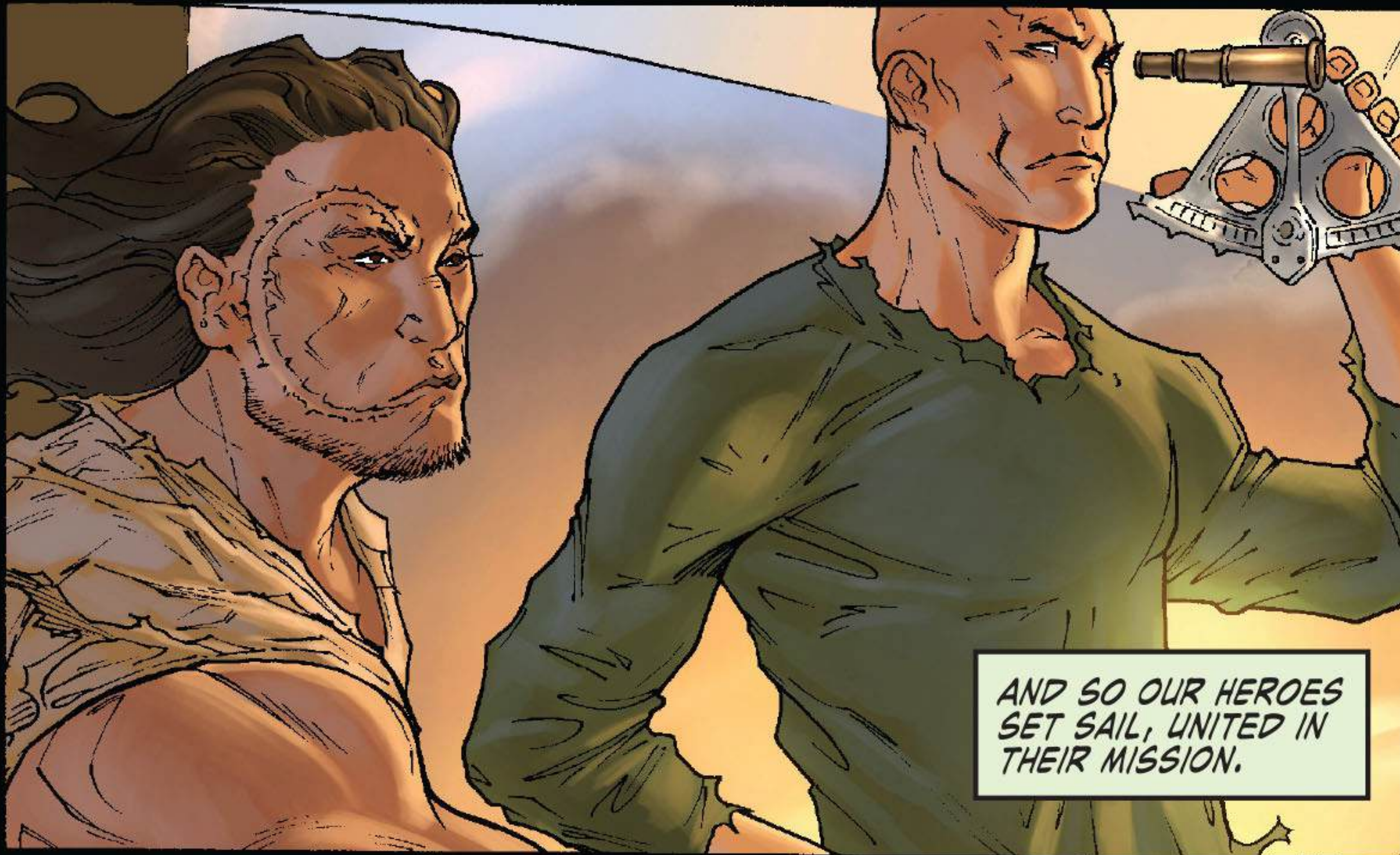


ONLY A BOAT COULD TAKE THEM TO BURMA.

AND BURMA WAS WHERE THE POET EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR II ROTTED IN WAIT.



THE POET EMPEROR HAD MANY FANS--
INCLUDING TWO OLD FISHERMEN
MORE THAN HAPPY TO LOAN THEIR
BOAT TO THE CAUSE OF HIS FREEDOM.



AND SO OUR HEROES
SET SAIL, UNITED IN
THEIR MISSION.



HOW
DO WE
EAT?



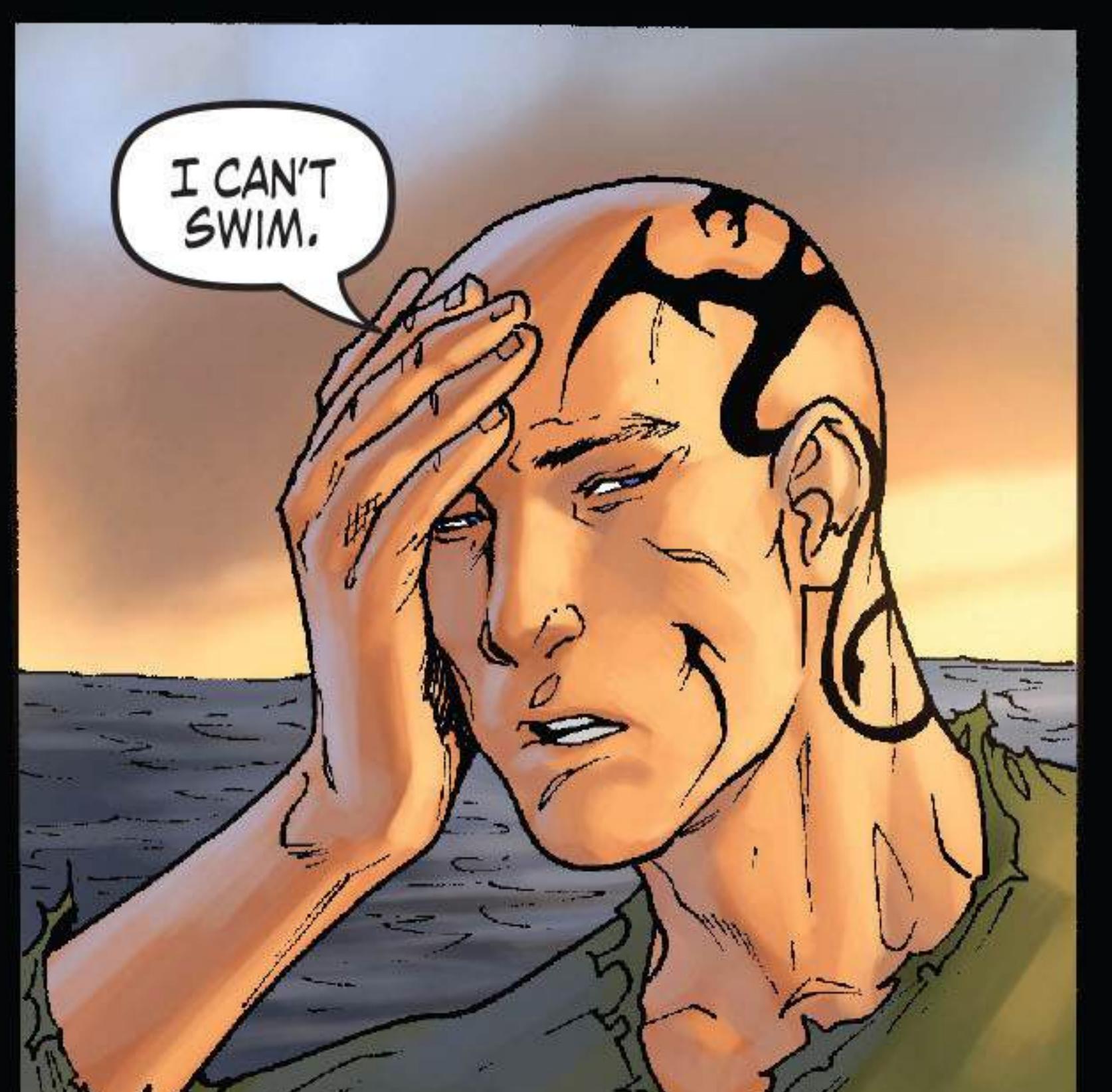
Days later...

WE MAY
HAVE MISCALCULATED
SOMEWHAT.

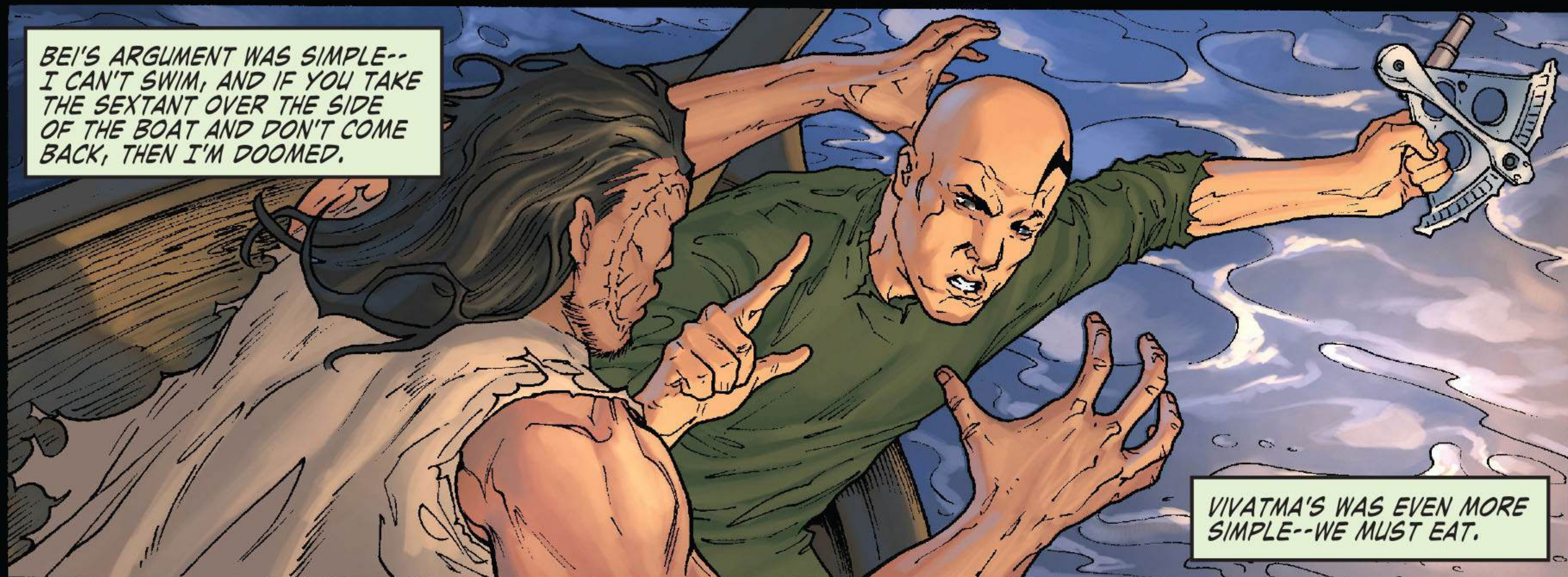
YES.
YES,
WE MAY
HAVE.



WE COULD USE THE ARC OF
THE SEXTANT AS AN *EDGE*,
GO OVERBOARD, AND USE IT
TO SLASH AT A FISH, OR
PERHAPS CUT AT
SEAWEED.

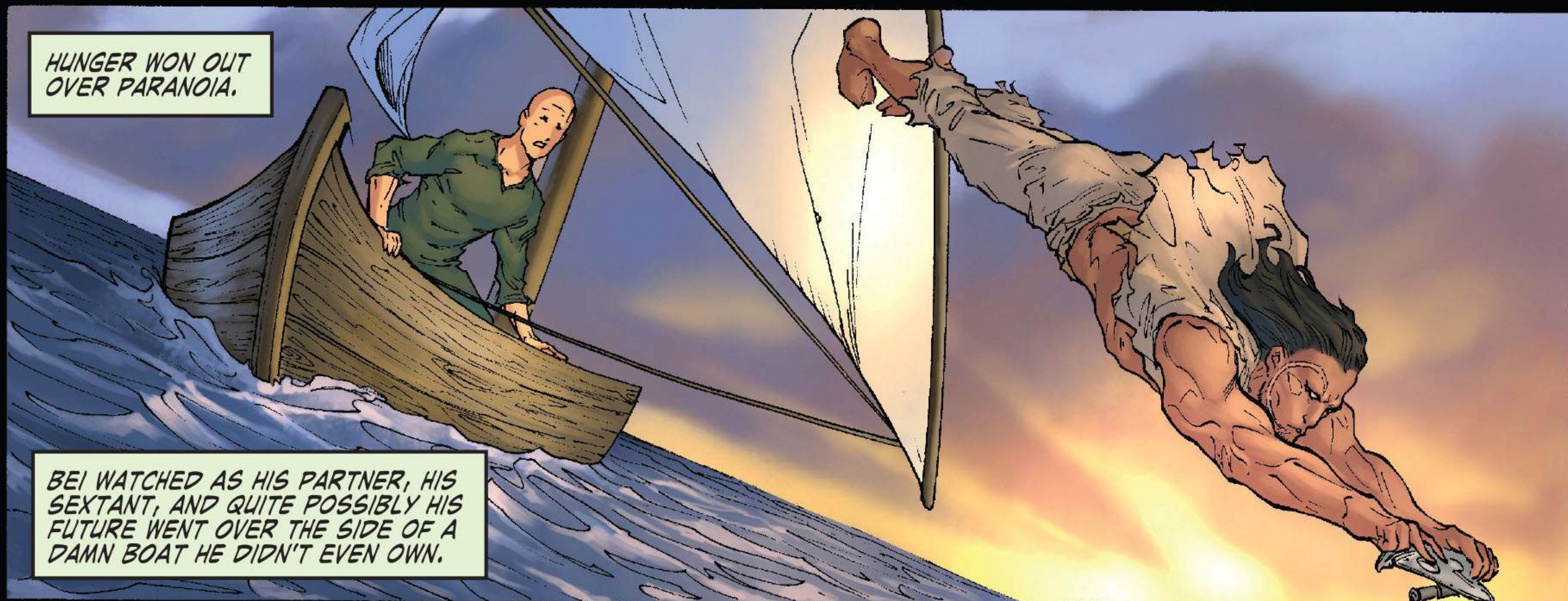


I CAN'T
SWIM.



BEI'S ARGUMENT WAS SIMPLE--
I CAN'T SWIM, AND IF YOU TAKE
THE SEXTANT OVER THE SIDE
OF THE BOAT AND DON'T COME
BACK, THEN I'M DOOMED.

VIVATMA'S WAS EVEN MORE
SIMPLE--WE MUST EAT.



HUNGER WON OUT
OVER PARANOIA.

BEI WATCHED AS HIS PARTNER, HIS
SEXTANT, AND QUITE POSSIBLY HIS
FUTURE WENT OVER THE SIDE OF A
DAMN BOAT HE DIDN'T EVEN OWN.



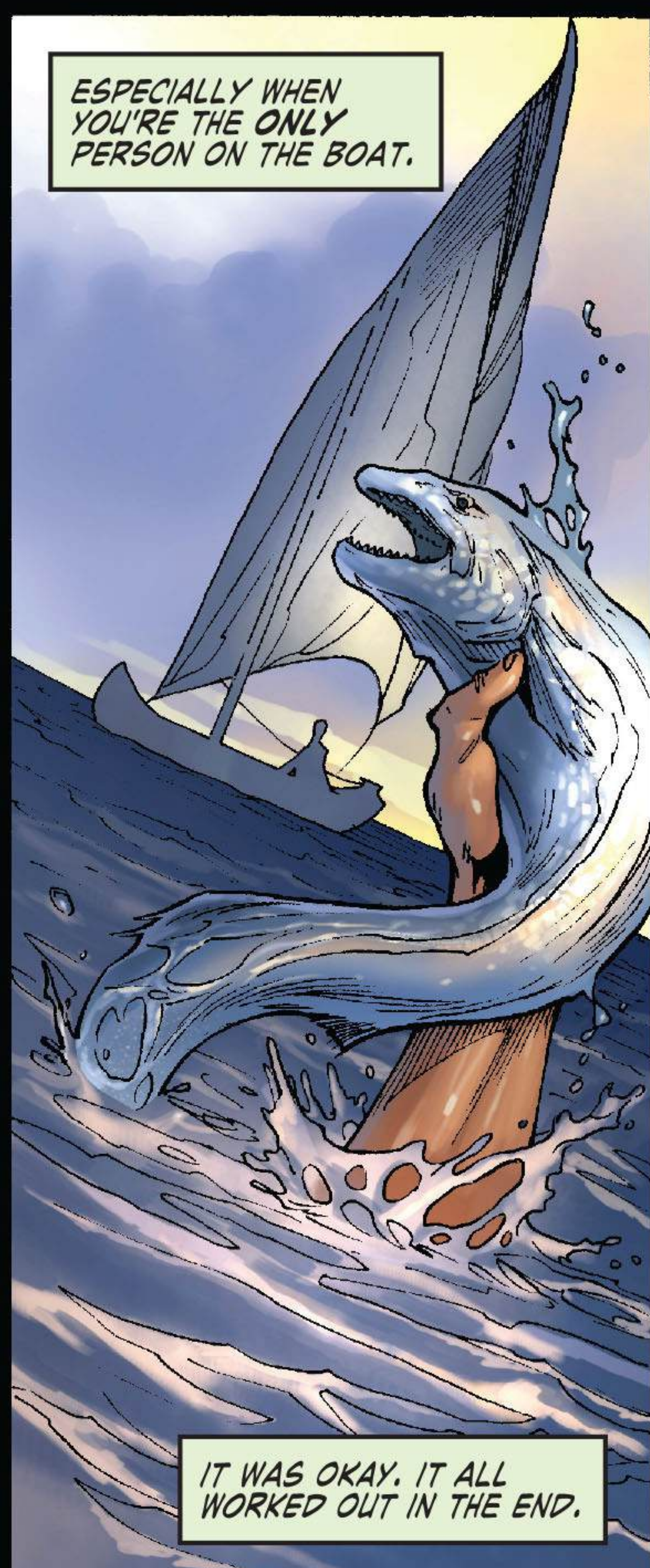
BEI REALIZED THEN THAT THESE
WERE THE WORRIES OF A MAN
CONCERNED WITH SURVIVAL.

A-HA! A CONTRADICTION!
A POINT OF ILLOGIC!
WHAT DID IT MEAN? WHAT
COULD IT MEAN? DID HE
ACTUALLY WANT TO LIVE?



...

IT MEANT THE ONLY
THING WORSE THAN
BEING THE SMARTEST
PERSON IN THE ROOM IS
BEING THE SMARTEST
PERSON ON A BOAT.



ESPECIALLY WHEN
YOU'RE THE ONLY
PERSON ON THE BOAT.

IT WAS OKAY. IT ALL
WORKED OUT IN THE END.



AND SLOWLY THEY
REACHED BURMA.

WASTING NO TIME, THEY
WENT RACING TO FIND
THEIR DESTINIES.



BEI FOLLOWED
VIVATMA.

VIVATMA FOLLOWED
HIS INSTINCT.



AND HIS INSTINCT
WAS TRUE.



IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE
BEEN FROM OUTER SPACE.

I **REALLY**
WISH I WAS STILL IN
COMMUNION WITH **THE**
BRAHMAN.

SURELY
ONLY THE BRAHMAN
COULD PENETRATE
SUCH A TREMENDOUS
FORTRESS.



BEHOLD! THE GLORY
TIMES OF THE BRAHMAN!
SUPREME INFINITE OF ALL
TRANSCENDENT REALITY!

UNFURLING FROM
INFINITUDE WITHIN,
REVERBERATING
THROUGHOUT ALL
COSMIC EXISTENCE!

THE WORLDSOUL!

ALL MEN MUST KNOW
THE BRAHMAN! FOR THE
BRAHMAN IS ALL MEN!

MY WORD.

OH, I
PROMISE YOU, IT WAS
QUITE SOMETHING
TO SEE.

TOO
BAD HIS SPIRIT HAS
MISPLACED ME.
LET'S GO.



AND SO THEY WENT.

INCH BY INCH THEY STORMED
THE PALACE PRISON.



WELL.

"STORMED" MAYBE
OVERSTATES THINGS.



ALL THE SAME, THEY
MADE THEIR WAY INSIDE.



AND SLOWLY BUT SURELY,
THEY MADE THEIR WAY UP.

EACH MAN WAS THINKING
THE SAME THING BUT
ALLOWING IT TO GO
UNSAID BETWEEN THEM:



THIS SHOULD BE
HARDER.

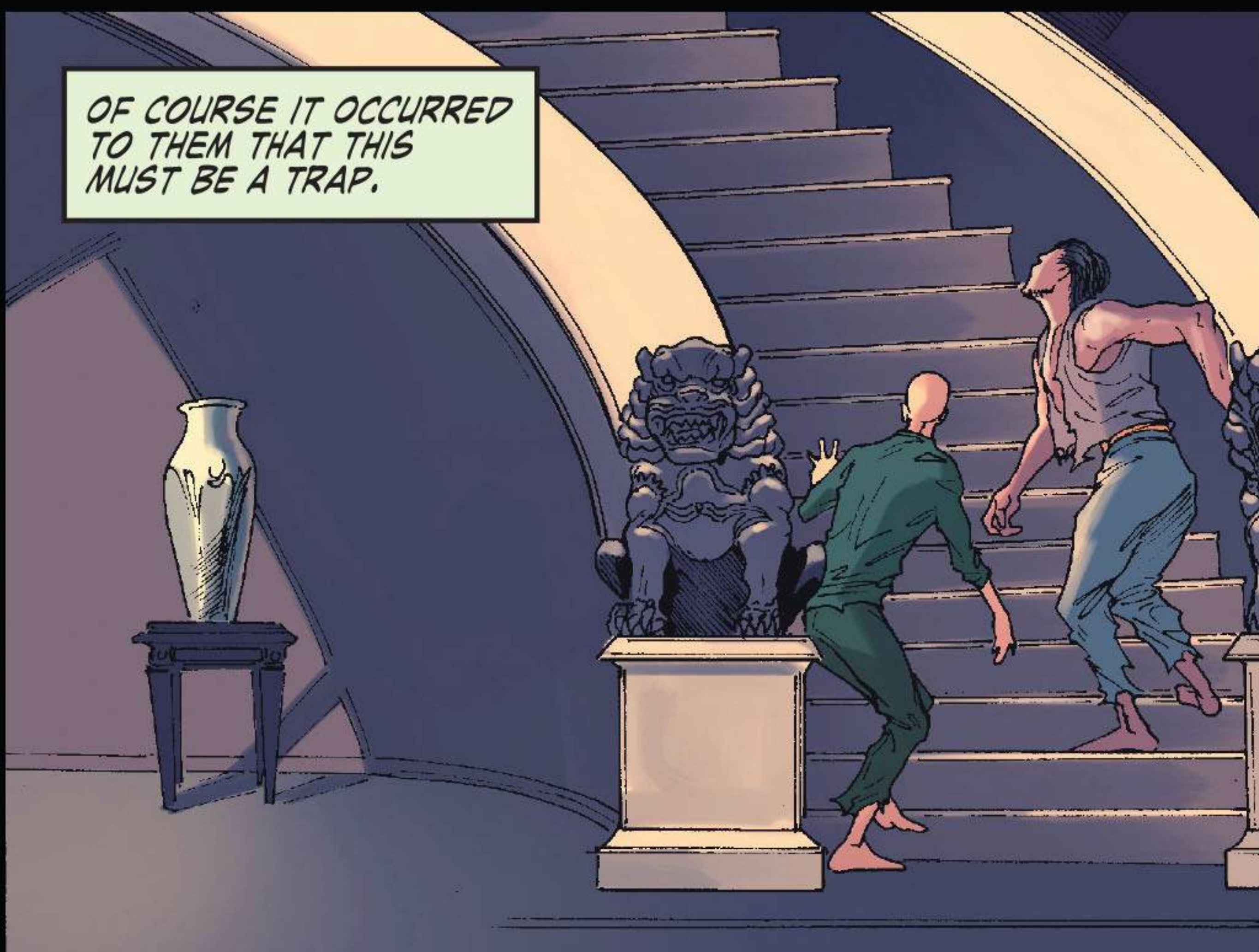


THERE SHOULD BE
MORE GUARDS.

MORE FIGHTING.

MORE VIOLENCE.

OF COURSE IT OCCURRED
TO THEM THAT THIS
MUST BE A TRAP.



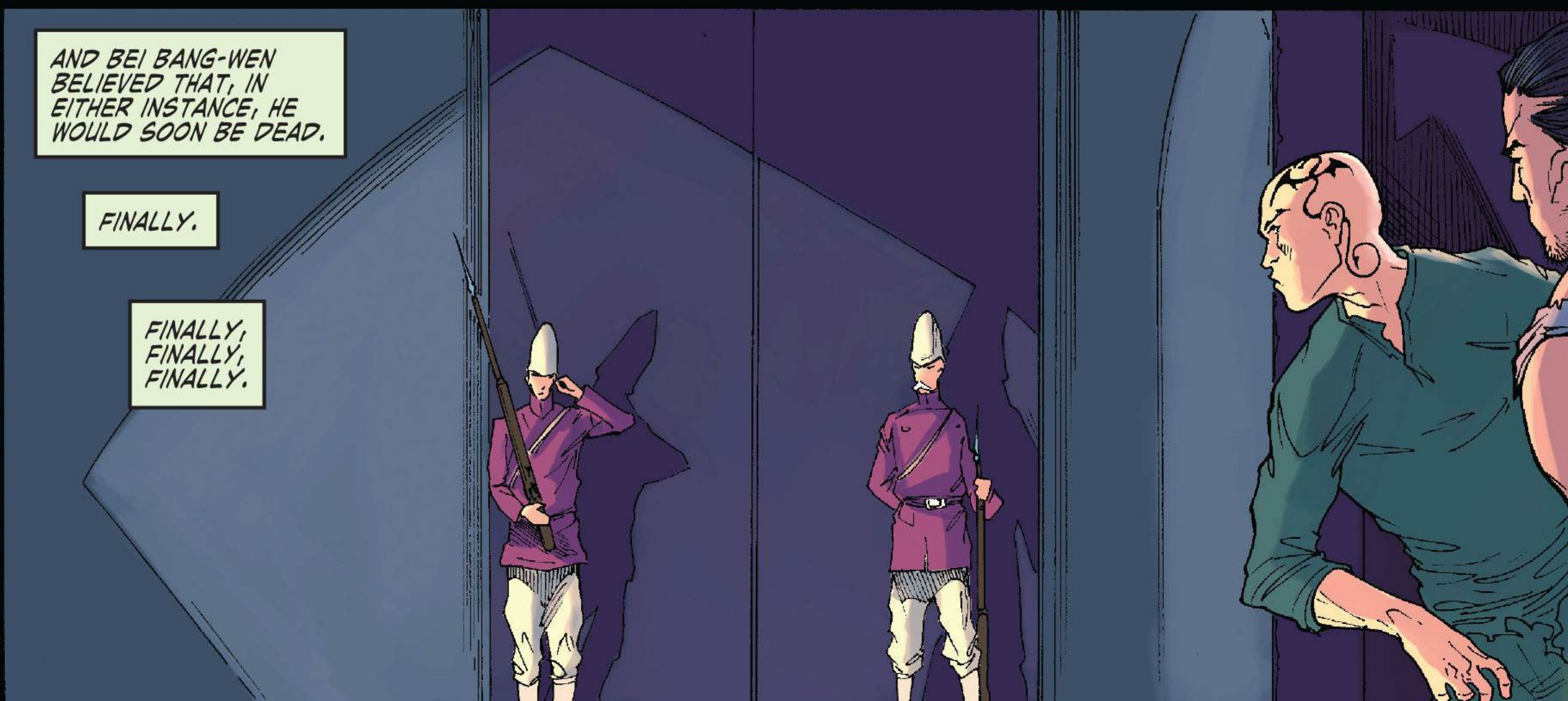
VIVATMA VISVAJIT BELIEVED THAT,
IF IT WAS A TRAP, THEN AT LEAST HIS
LORD AND MASTER WOULD BE THE BAIT.



AND BEI BANG-WEN
BELIEVED THAT, IN
EITHER INSTANCE, HE
WOULD SOON BE DEAD.

FINALLY.

FINALLY,
FINALLY,
FINALLY.



WRONG
AGAIN.



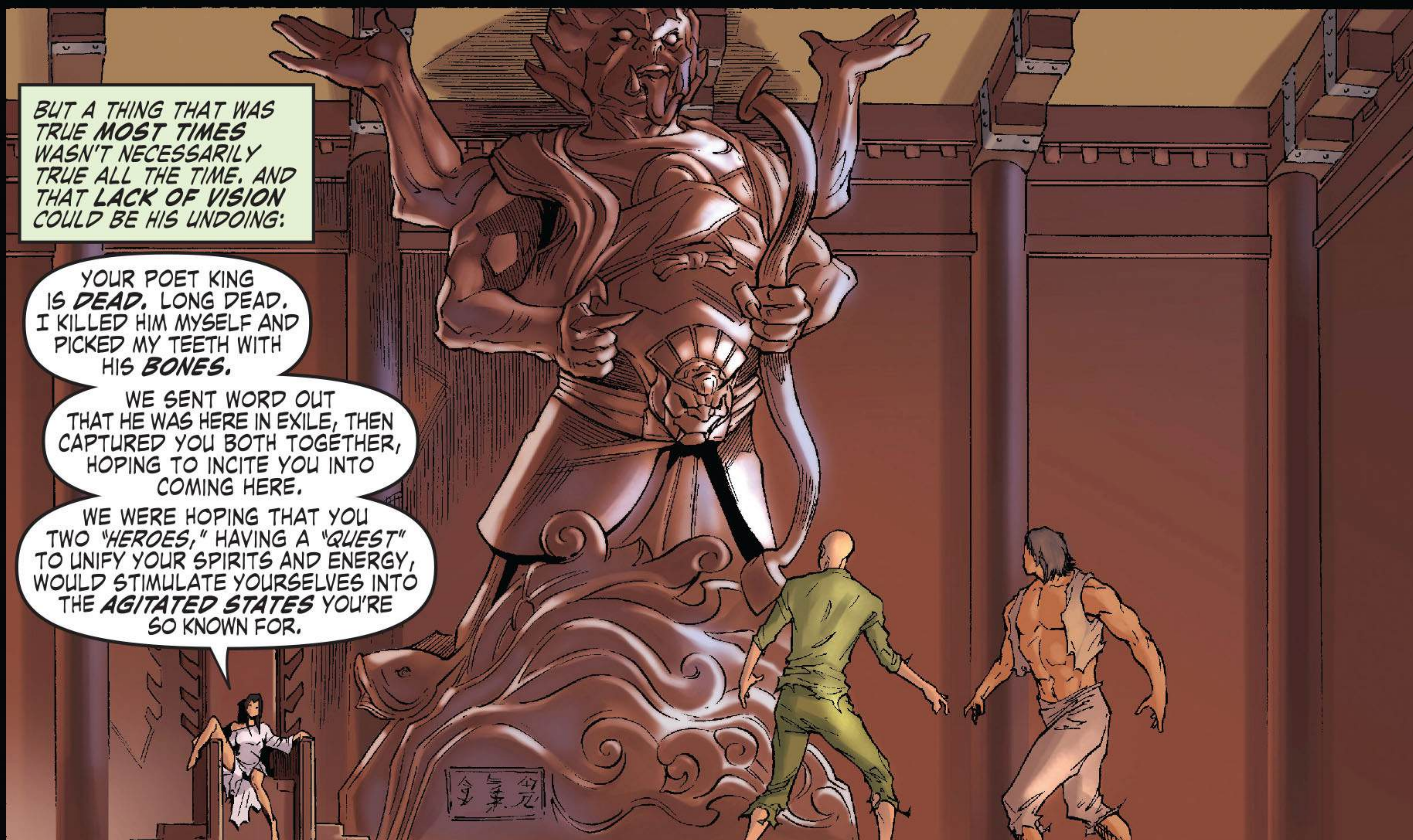
HUMBLING TO ONE SUCH AS BEI
BANG-WEN, WHO HAD ALWAYS
BELIEVED HIMSELF TO BE THE
SMARTEST PERSON IN THE ROOM.

BUT A THING THAT WAS TRUE MOST TIMES WASN'T NECESSARILY TRUE ALL THE TIME. AND THAT LACK OF VISION COULD BE HIS UNDOING:

YOUR POET KING IS DEAD. LONG DEAD. I KILLED HIM MYSELF AND PICKED MY TEETH WITH HIS BONES.

WE SENT WORD OUT THAT HE WAS HERE IN EXILE, THEN CAPTURED YOU BOTH TOGETHER, HOPING TO INCITE YOU INTO COMING HERE.

WE WERE HOPING THAT YOU TWO "HEROES," HAVING A "QUEST" TO UNIFY YOUR SPIRITS AND ENERGY, WOULD STIMULATE YOURSELVES INTO THE AGITATED STATES YOU'RE SO KNOWN FOR.



AND YET HERE YOU BOTH ARE: SO DREADFULLY NORMAL.

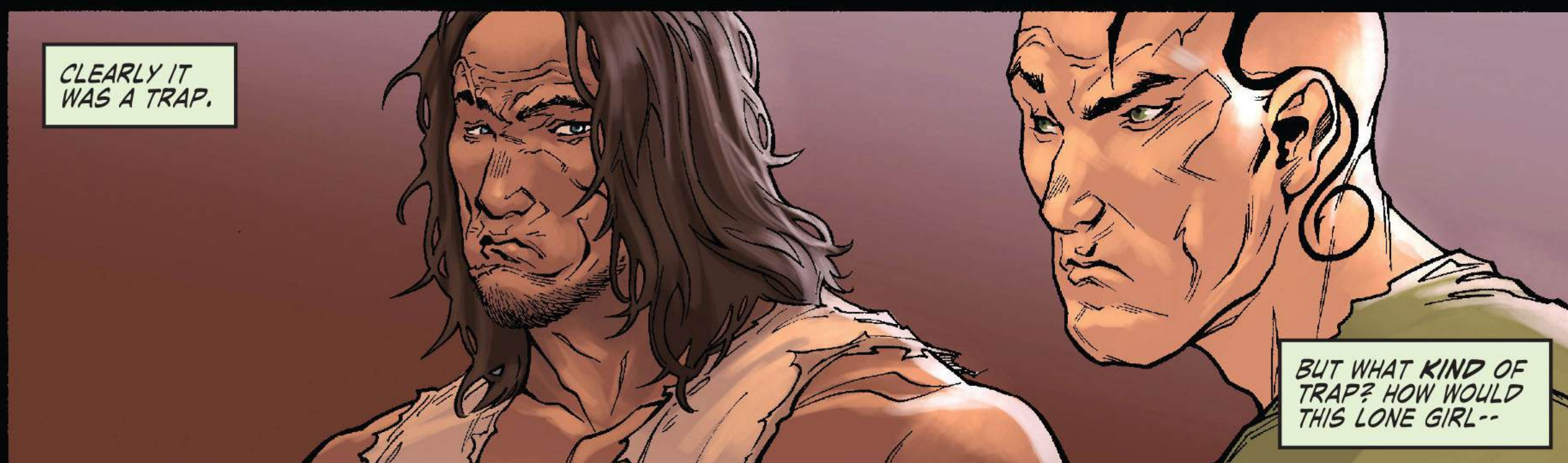
PITY.

FOR I AM SO VERY HUNGRY, AND YOU TWO...

...YOU BARELY LOOK LIKE A SNACK.



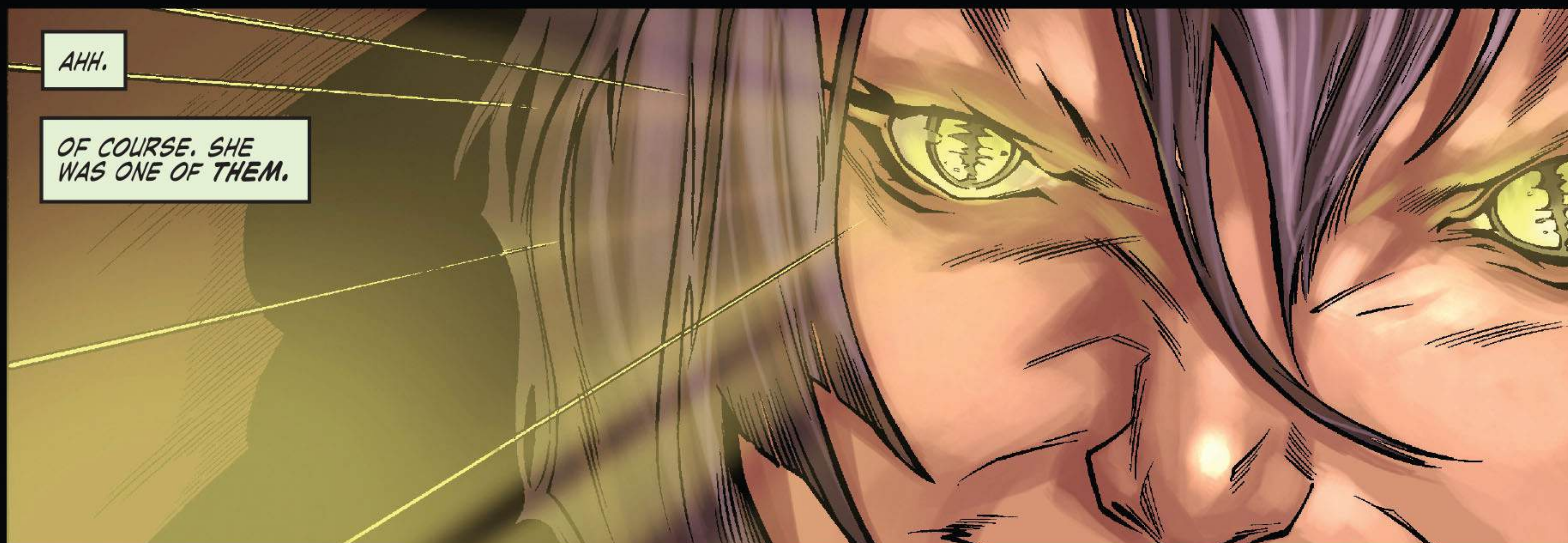
CLEARLY IT WAS A TRAP.

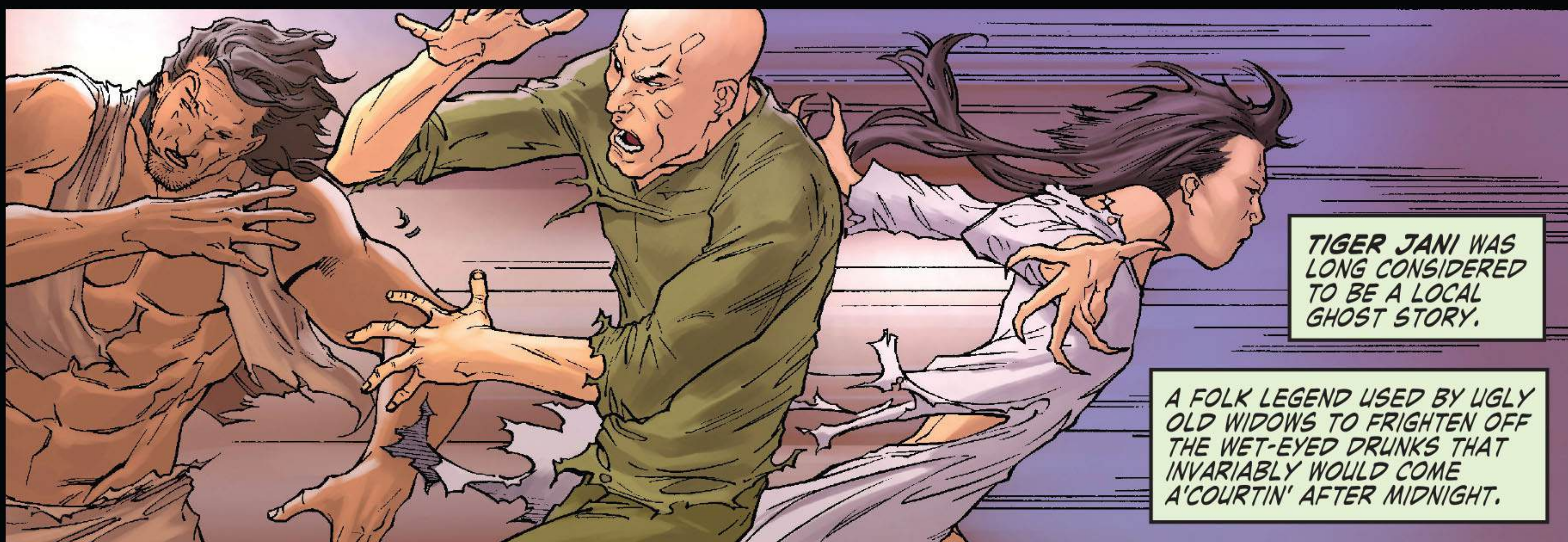


BUT WHAT KIND OF TRAP? HOW WOULD THIS LONE GIRL--

AHH.

OF COURSE. SHE WAS ONE OF THEM.





TIGER JANI WAS LONG CONSIDERED TO BE A LOCAL GHOST STORY.

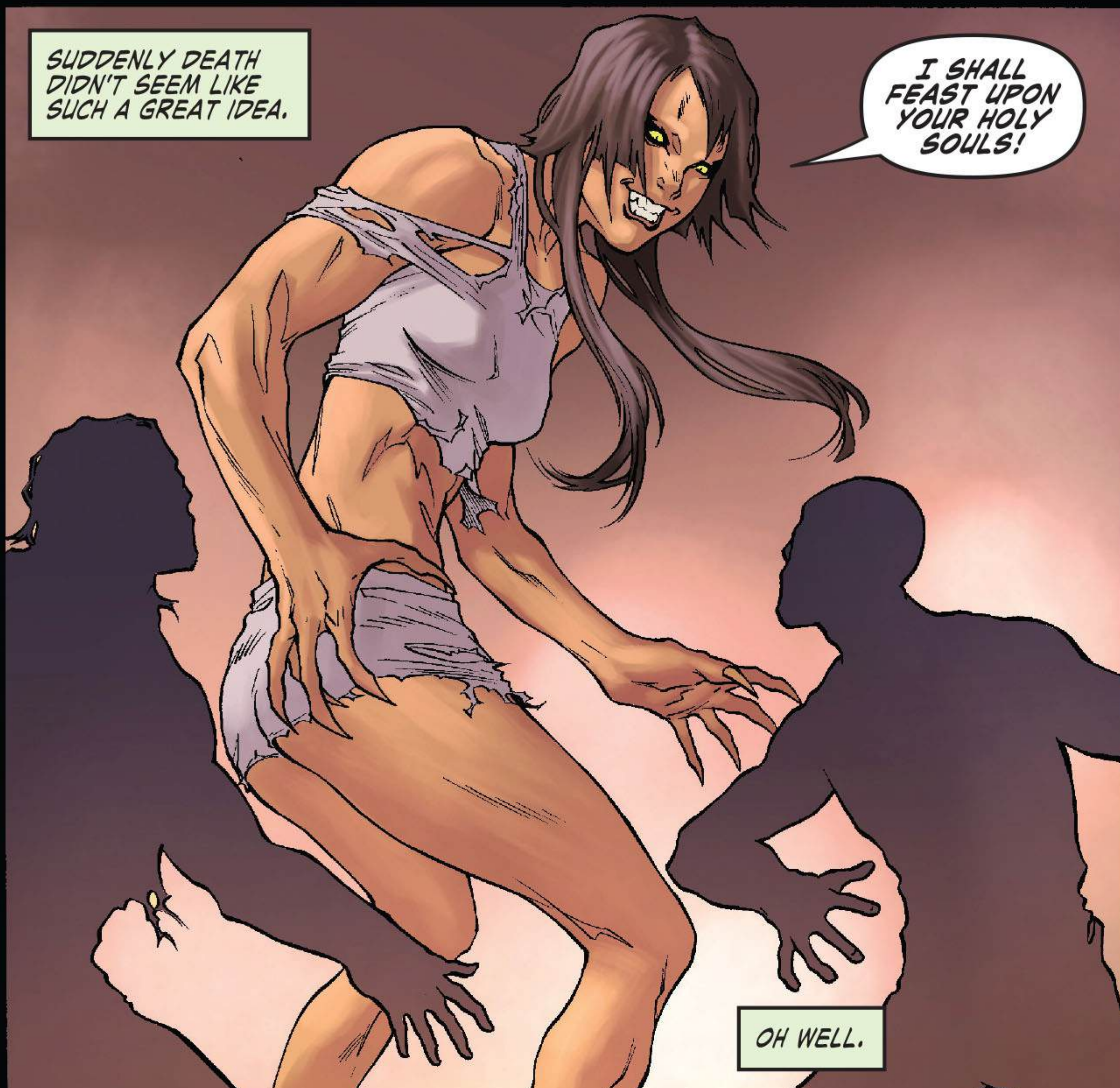
A FOLK LEGEND USED BY UGLY OLD WIDOWS TO FRIGHTEN OFF THE WET-EYED DRUNKS THAT INVARIABLY WOULD COME A'COURTIN' AFTER MIDNIGHT.



TIGER JANI IS REAL?

BEI HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO NOT KNOW EVERYTHING ALL THE TIME.

THAT, AND THE SUDDEN BLOOD LOSS, CREATED IN HIM A FEELING LIKE UNTO EUPHORIA.



I SHALL FEAST UPON YOUR HOLY SOULS!

OH WELL.



VIVATMA WAS STUNNED. NOT BY THE GIRL'S TRANSFORMATION--

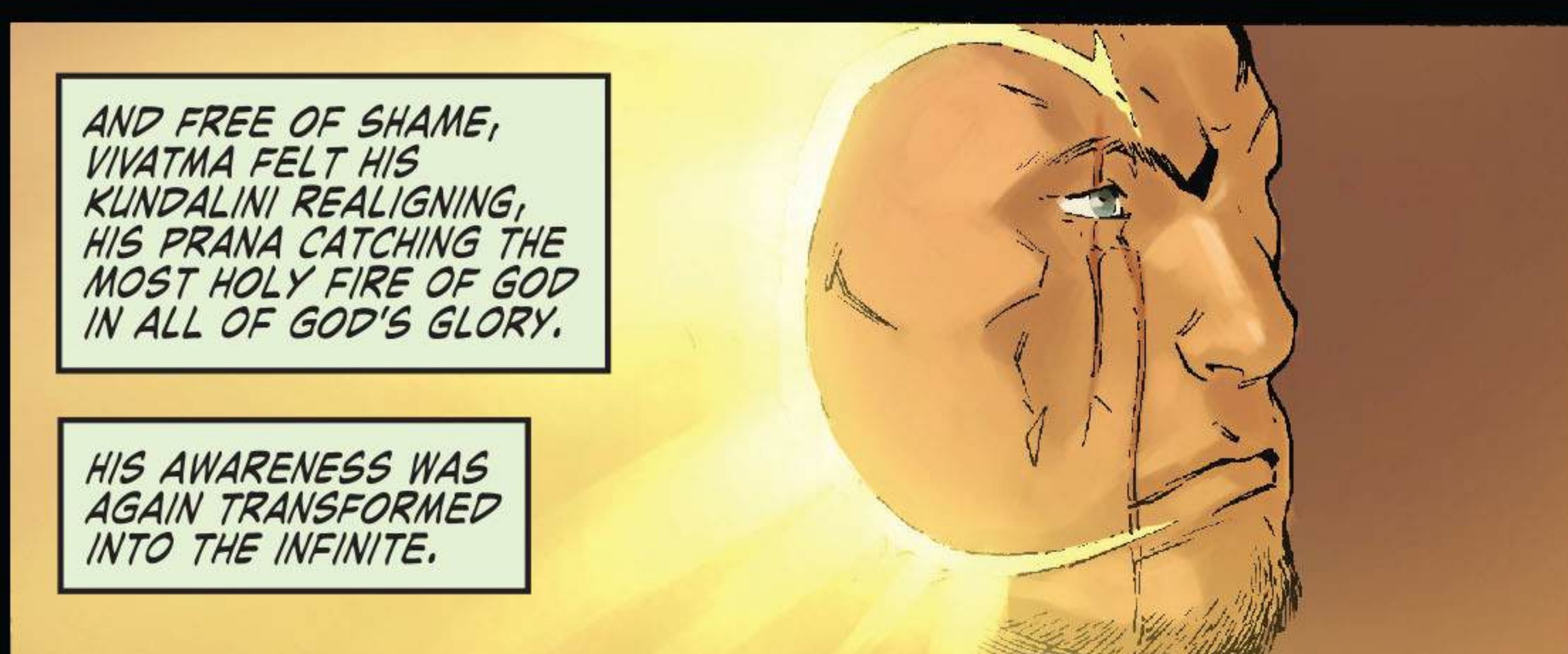
ALTHOUGH IT WAS STUNNING--

BUT BY FINDING HIMSELF QUITE SUDDENLY WITHOUT A DIRECTION.



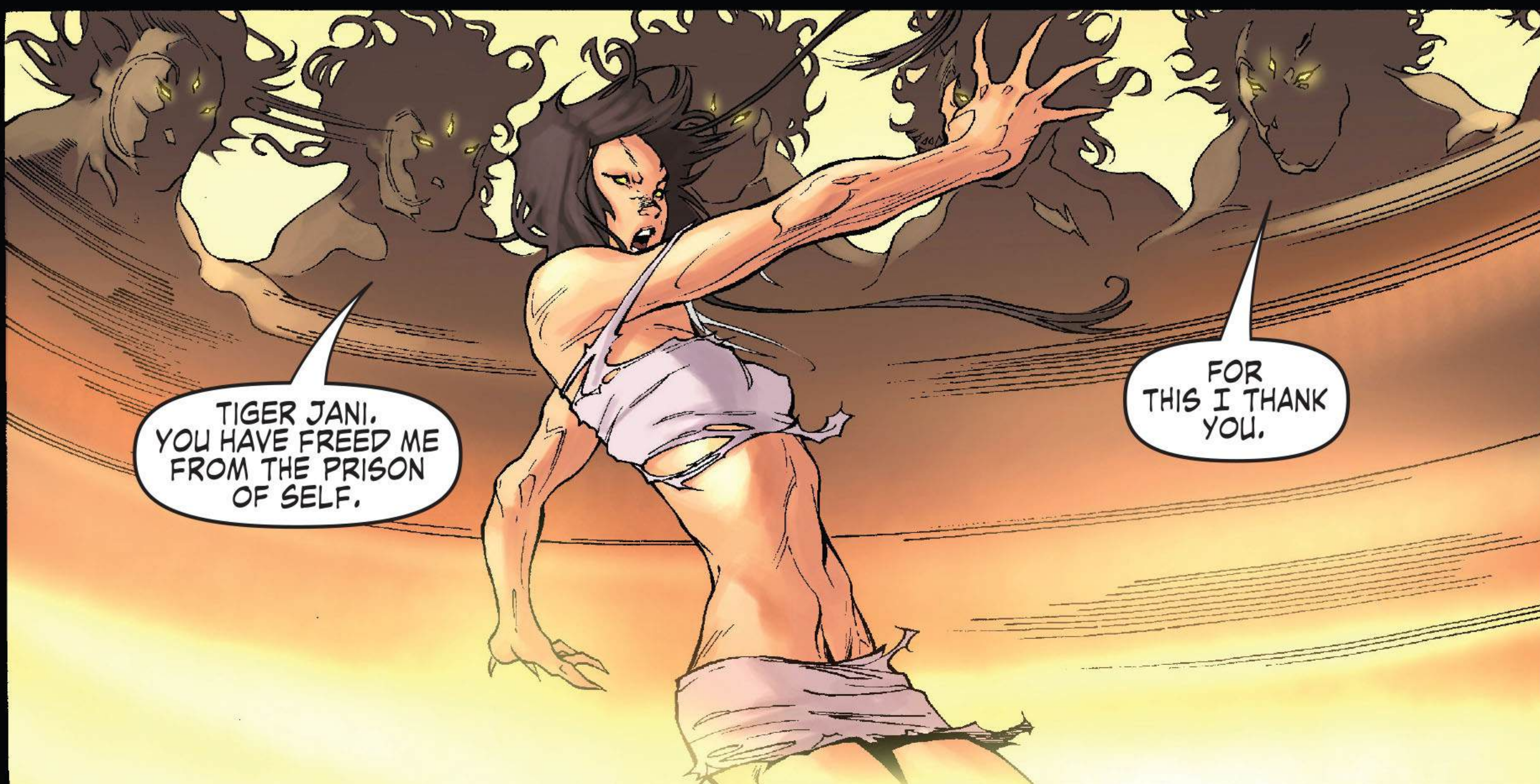
WITHOUT A POET EMPEROR TO SAVE, VIVATMA HAD NO PURPOSE.

WITHOUT A GREAT SIN TO ATONE FOR, VIVATMA HAD NO MORE SHAME.



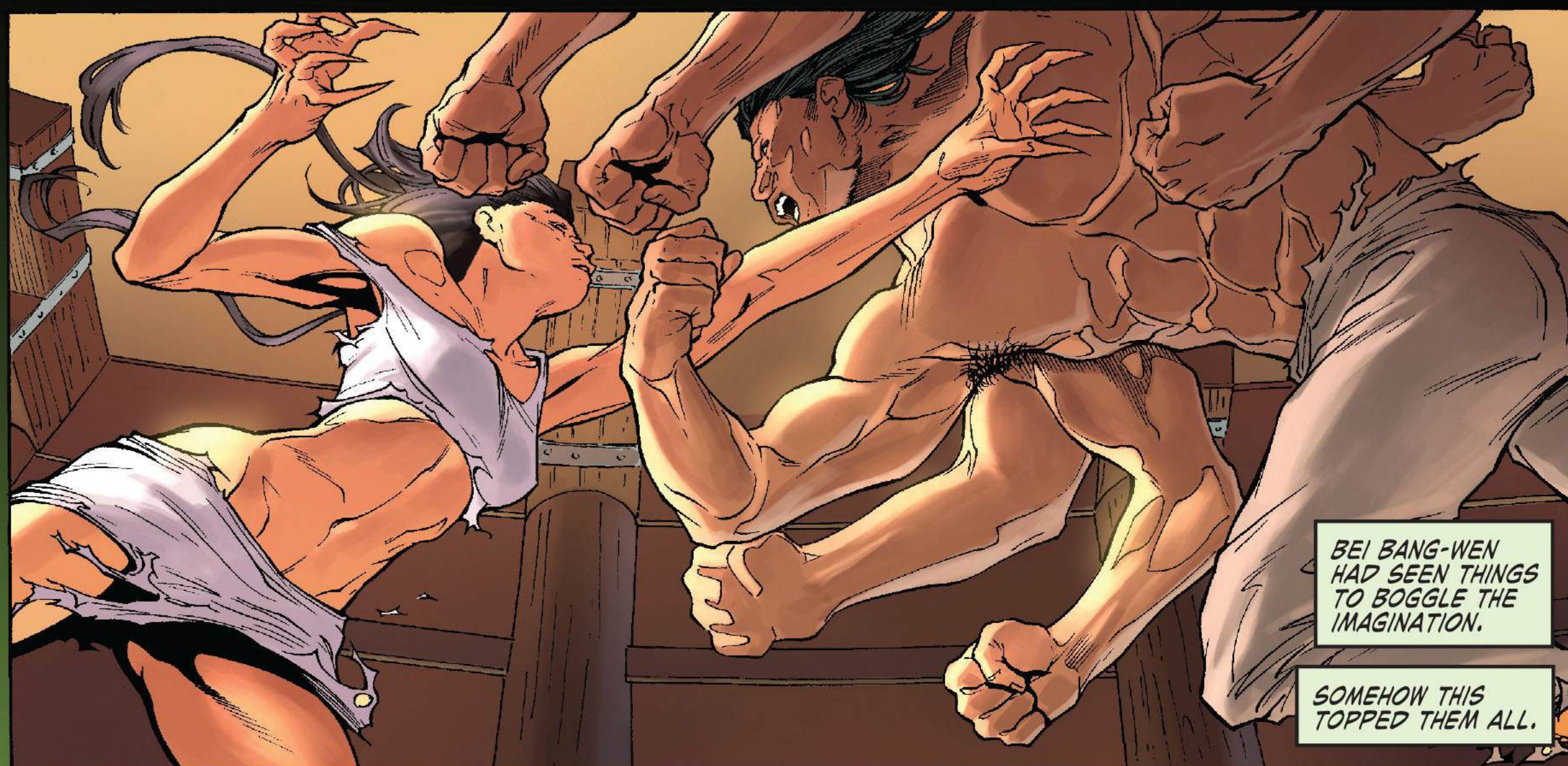
AND FREE OF SHAME, VIVATMA FELT HIS KUNDALINI REALIGNING, HIS PRANA CATCHING THE MOST HOLY FIRE OF GOD IN ALL OF GOD'S GLORY.

HIS AWARENESS WAS AGAIN TRANSFORMED INTO THE INFINITE.



TIGER JANI,
YOU HAVE FREED ME
FROM THE PRISON
OF SELF.

FOR
THIS I THANK
YOU.



BEI BANG-WEN
HAD SEEN THINGS
TO BOGGLE THE
IMAGINATION.

SOMEHOW THIS
TOPPED THEM ALL.



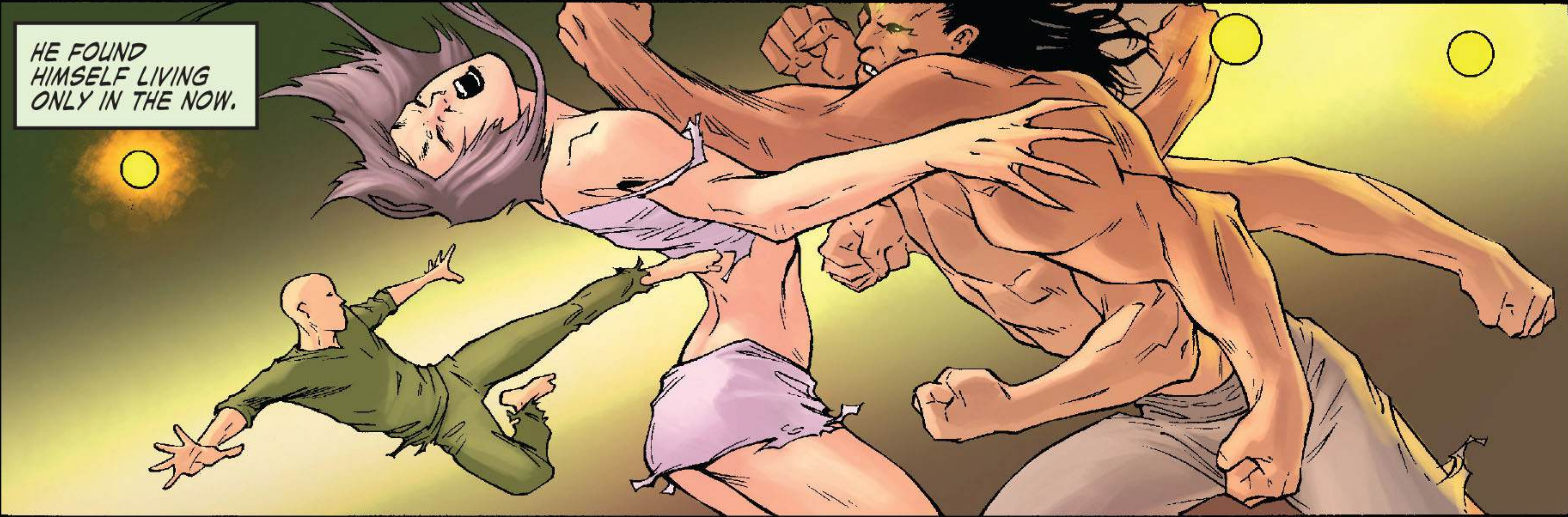
THE DAY'S EVENTS
PRODUCED A KIND OF
REVERIE WITHIN HIM.

TO BE TOUCHED AGAIN
BY THE UNKNOWN.



THE PAST AND THE FUTURE NO
LONGER EXISTING. BEI AWOKE
TO FIND HIMSELF IN THE EVER-
PRESENT GLORY OF THE NOW.

IT WAS WITH THIS BLISS
WITHIN HIS HEART THAT
HE LEAPT INTO BATTLE.



HE FOUND
HIMSELF LIVING
ONLY IN THE NOW.



OF FIGHTING ONLY
IN THE NOW.

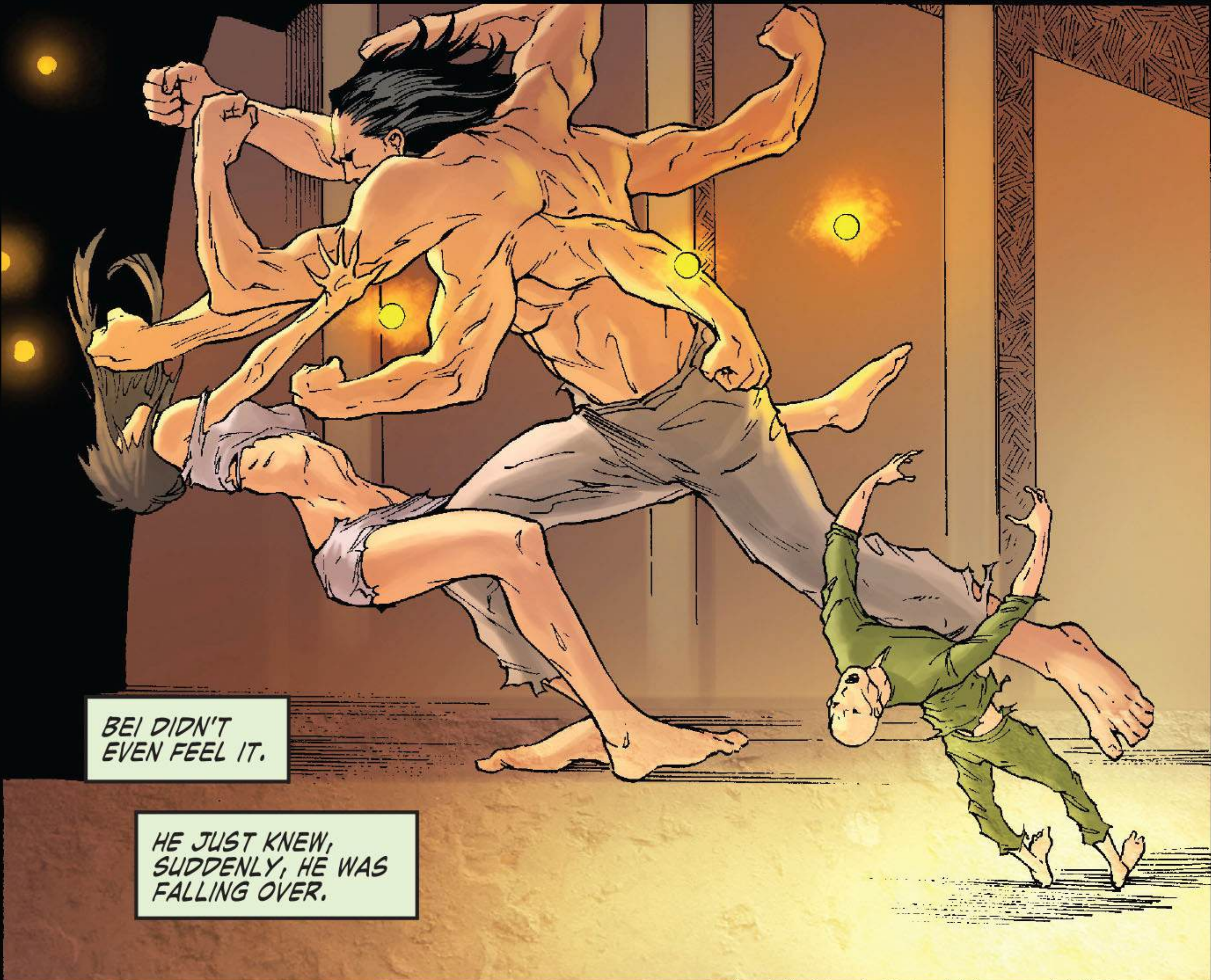
FREE OF THE
THOUSANDS OF
DEATHS HE
BLAMED
HIMSELF FOR,
FREE OF HIS
LEGACY, FREE
OF HIS MISSION.



FREE.



NO--!

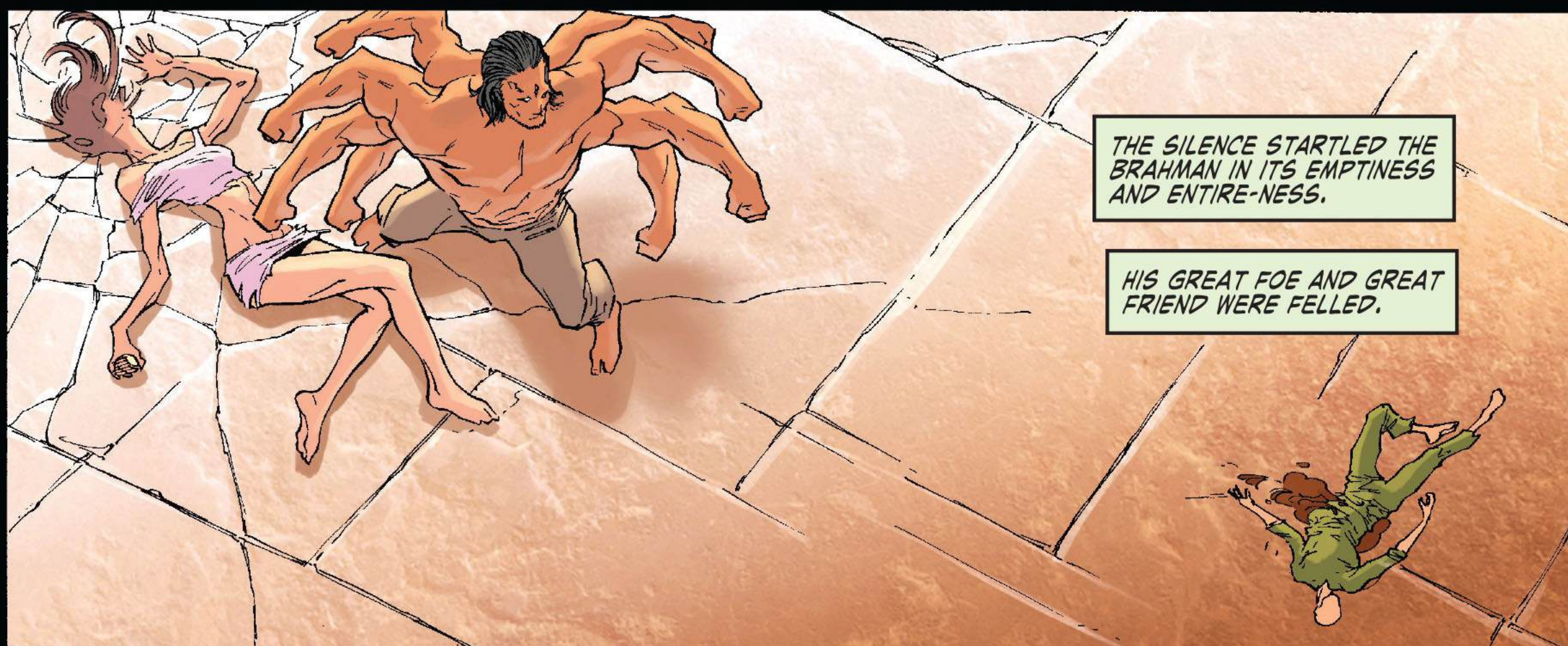


BEI DIDN'T
EVEN FEEL IT.

HE JUST KNEW,
SUDDENLY, HE WAS
FALLING OVER.

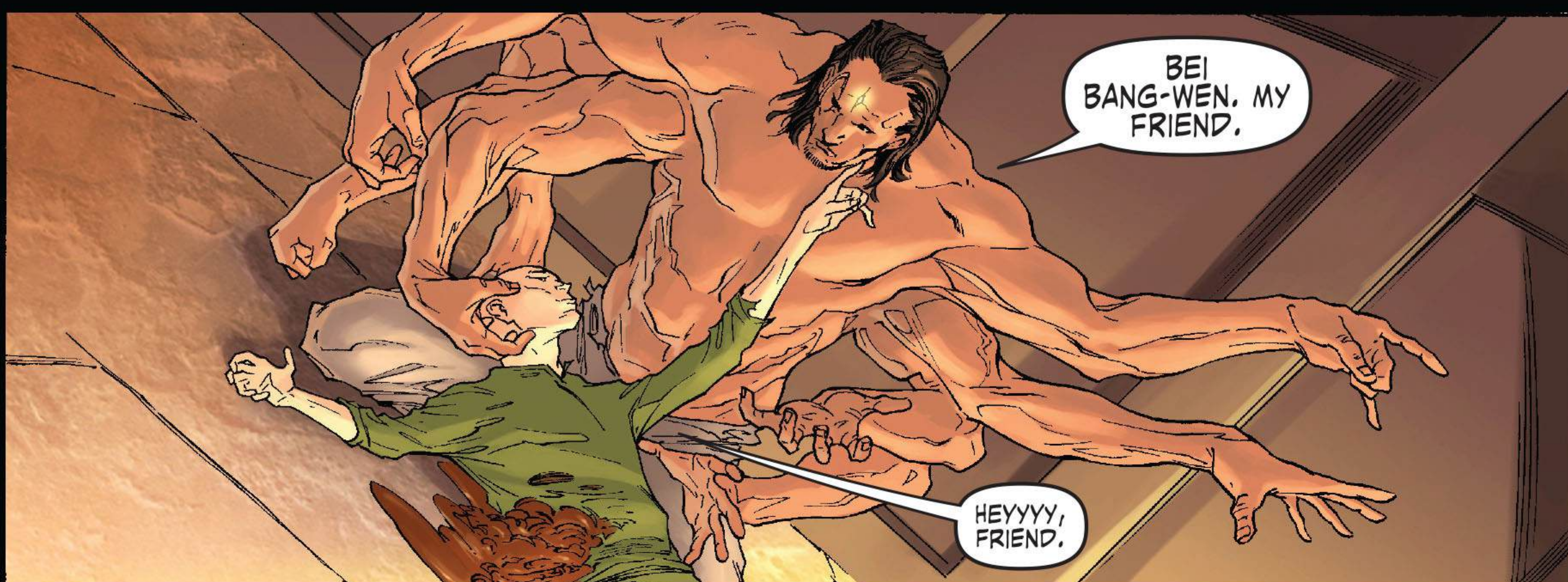


AND THEN HE
WAS DOWN.



THE SILENCE STARTLED THE
BRAHMAN IN ITS EMPTINESS
AND ENTIRE-NESS.

HIS GREAT FOE AND GREAT
FRIEND WERE FELLED.



BEI
BANG-WEN. MY
FRIEND.

HEYYYY,
FRIEND.



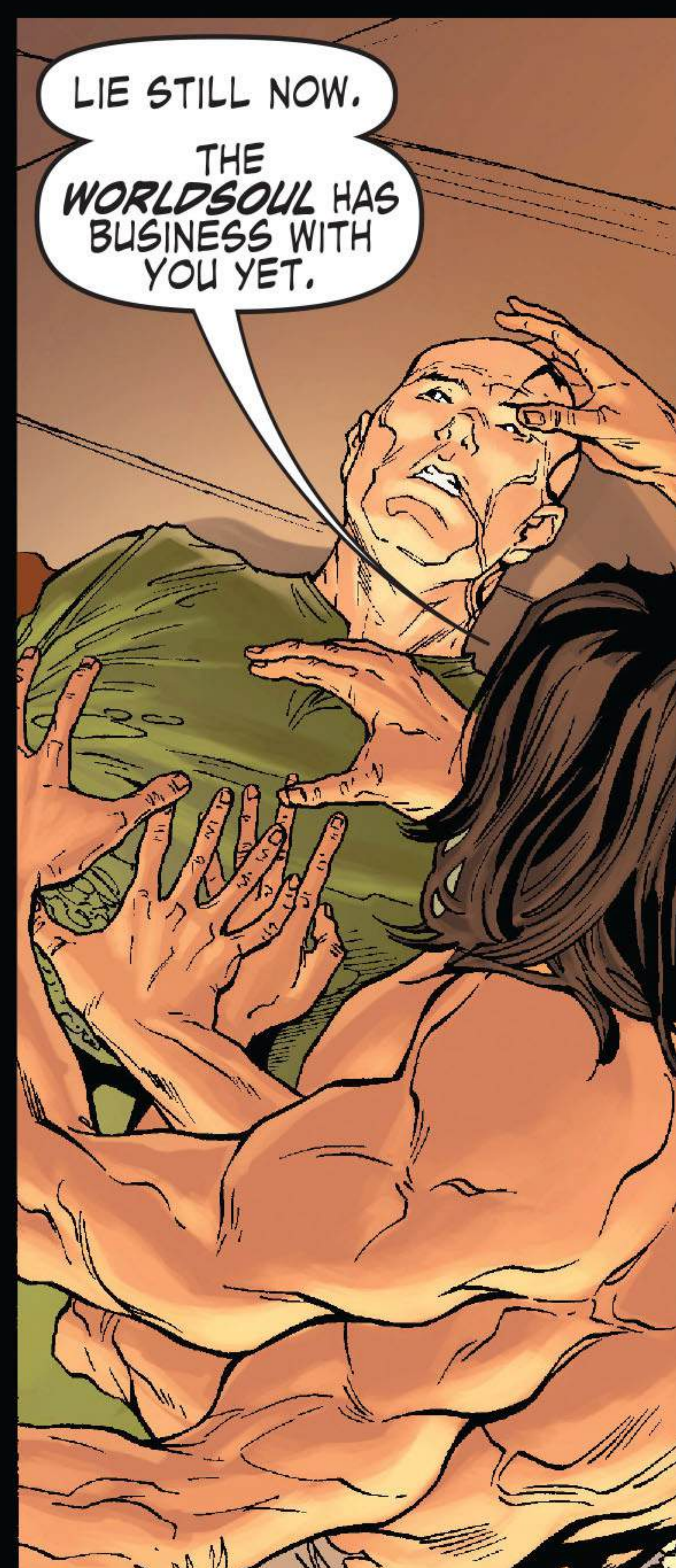
IT
FEEEEELS--

IT FEELS LIKE
I'M...*FLOATING*
AWAY.



YES.

I AM
FAMILIAR WITH THE
SENSATION.



LIE STILL NOW.

THE
*WORLD**SOUL* HAS
BUSINESS WITH
YOU YET.

FINALLY, IN THE MOMENT OF HIS **DEATH**, BEI BANG-WEN HAD STOPPED WONDERING ABOUT THE FUTURE.



AND HE FELT FREED FROM THE PAST.

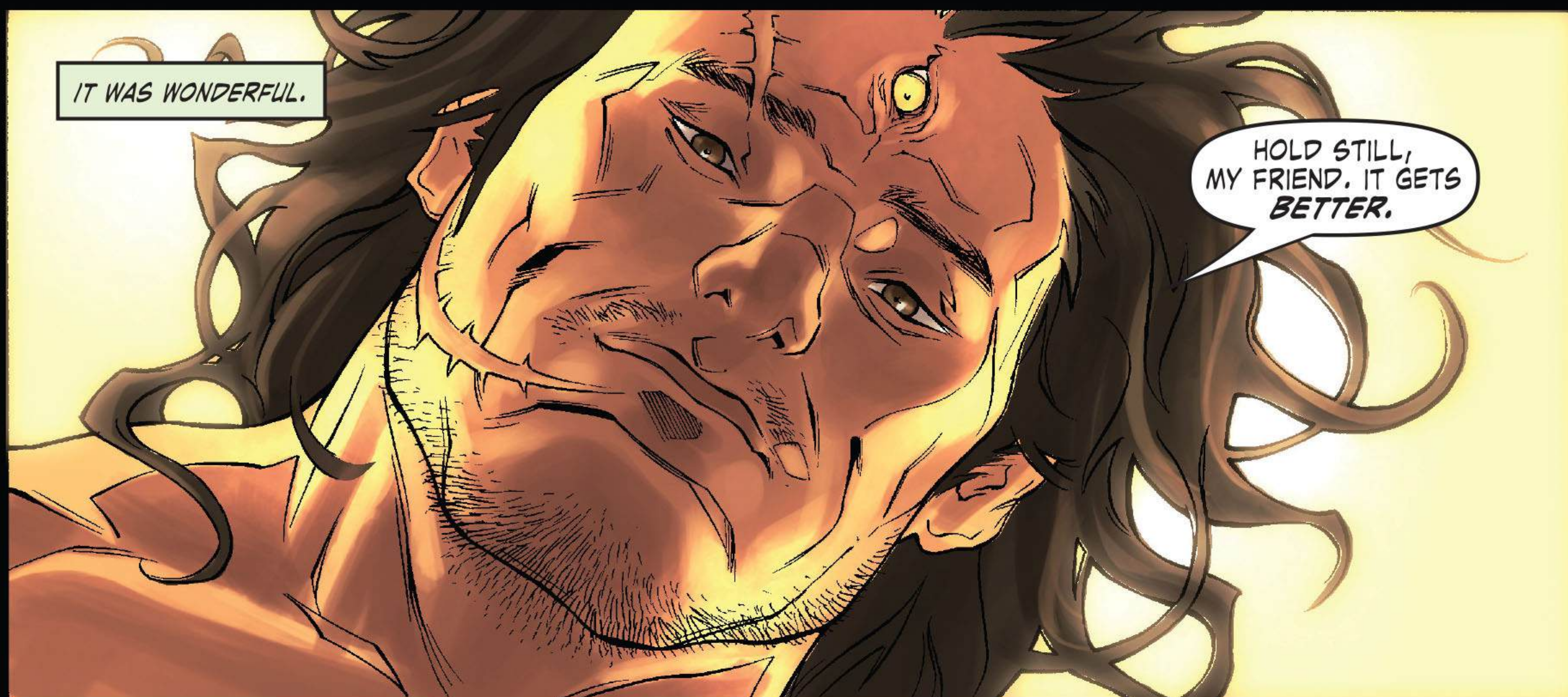


IN FACT...



HE WAS FREED FROM LIFE ITSELF.

IT WAS WONDERFUL.



HOLD STILL, MY FRIEND. IT GETS **BETTER**.

THE BRAHMAN
INFUSED HIS OWN
PRANA TO THE HIDDEN
CHI OF SHOU-LAO
THAT LAY DORMANT
WITHIN BEI BANG-WEN.



BEI'S CHI, NO LONGER BLOCKED
BY THE FALSE BARRIERS OF
SHAME AND GUILT, FLOWED WITH
RENEWED INTENSITY SO GREAT--

AAAAAAAHHH!



--IT HEALED HIM.

THANK YOU.



UNBELIEVABLE!

MIRACULOUS!



I ONLY
FREED WHAT WAS
ALWAYS WITHIN YOU,
MY BROTHER.



AND THIS DID
TWO HOLY WAR
DEITIES SURVIVE
THEIR SELF-
IMPOSED EXILE
AND BETRAYAL
BY TIGER JANI.

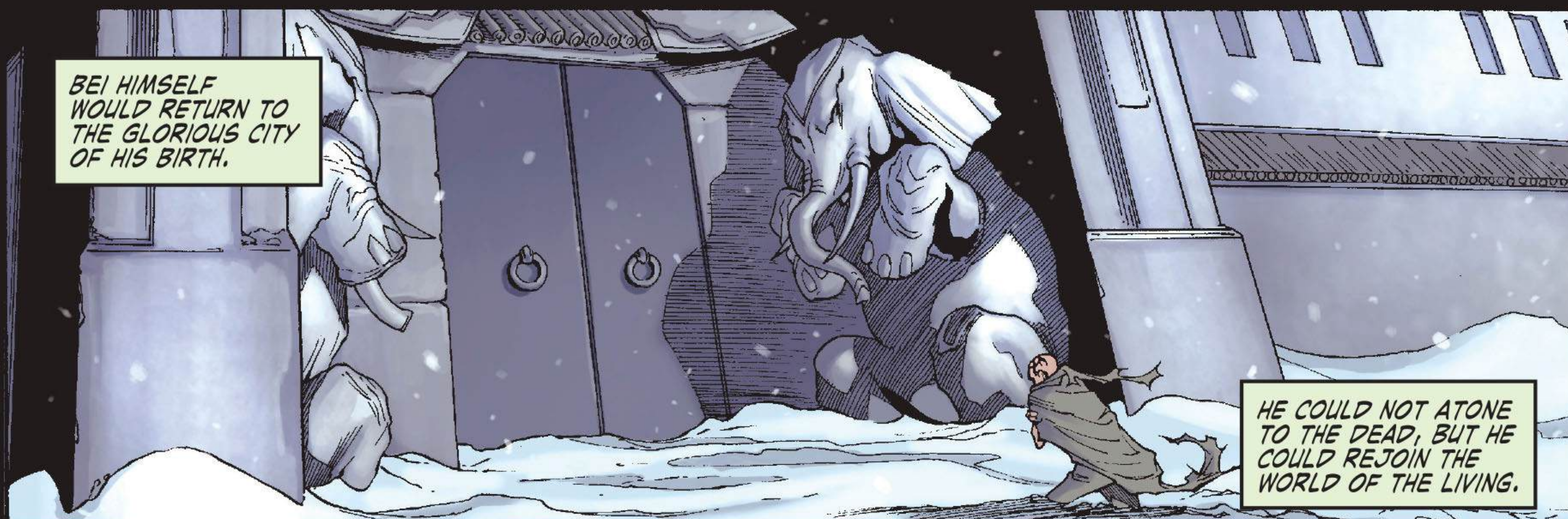
USING HIS PERFECT STRATEGY MIND ONCE MORE, BEI BANG-WEN DETERMINED THE WAY TO VICTORY.



VIVATMA VISVAJIT WOULD ADOPT THE ROLE OF HIS BELOVED EMPEROR, BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR II, AND THUS WOULD HIS SUBJECTS HAVE A THING TO BELIEVE IN.

A HERO TO FIGHT FOR.

BEI HIMSELF WOULD RETURN TO THE GLORIOUS CITY OF HIS BIRTH.



HE COULD NOT ATONE TO THE DEAD, BUT HE COULD REJOIN THE WORLD OF THE LIVING.

HE RELINQUISHED HIS POWERS--THE CHI OF SHOU-LAO, THE MYSTICAL FORCE THAT MADE HIM THE IRON FIST--BACK UNTO K'UN-LUN.



AND SO THE CYCLE OF THE IRON FIST COULD BEGIN AGAIN.

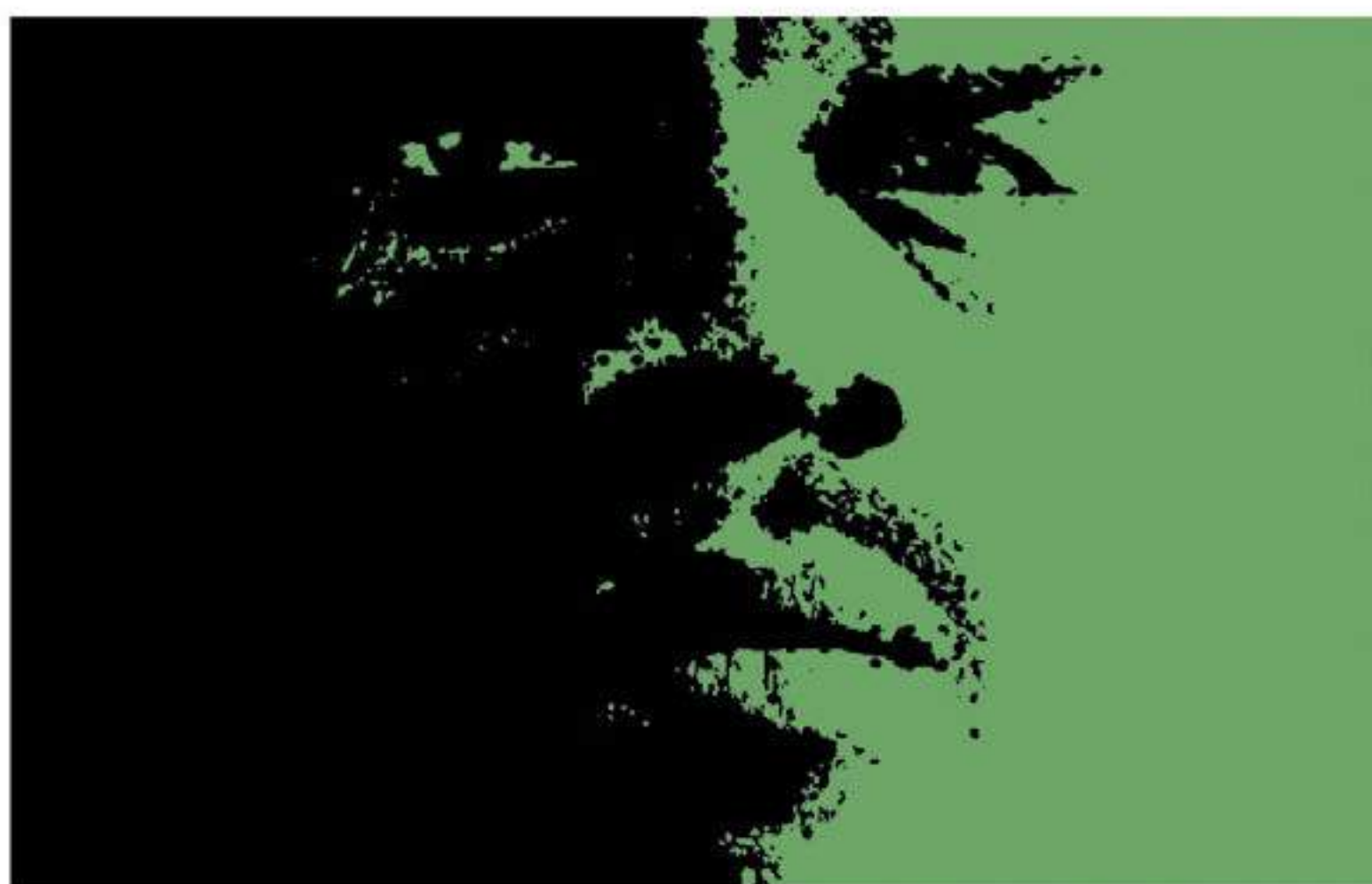
HE HAD A WIFE, AND TOGETHER THEY HAD A FAMILY OF THIRTEEN SONS.

THAT HE DIED IN THE MUD AND THE BLOOD AT THE FORTS OF TAKU REMAINS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HIS IMMORTAL LEGEND.



THE END

NEXT ISSUE



THE PARTNER

THE FRIEND



THE LOVER



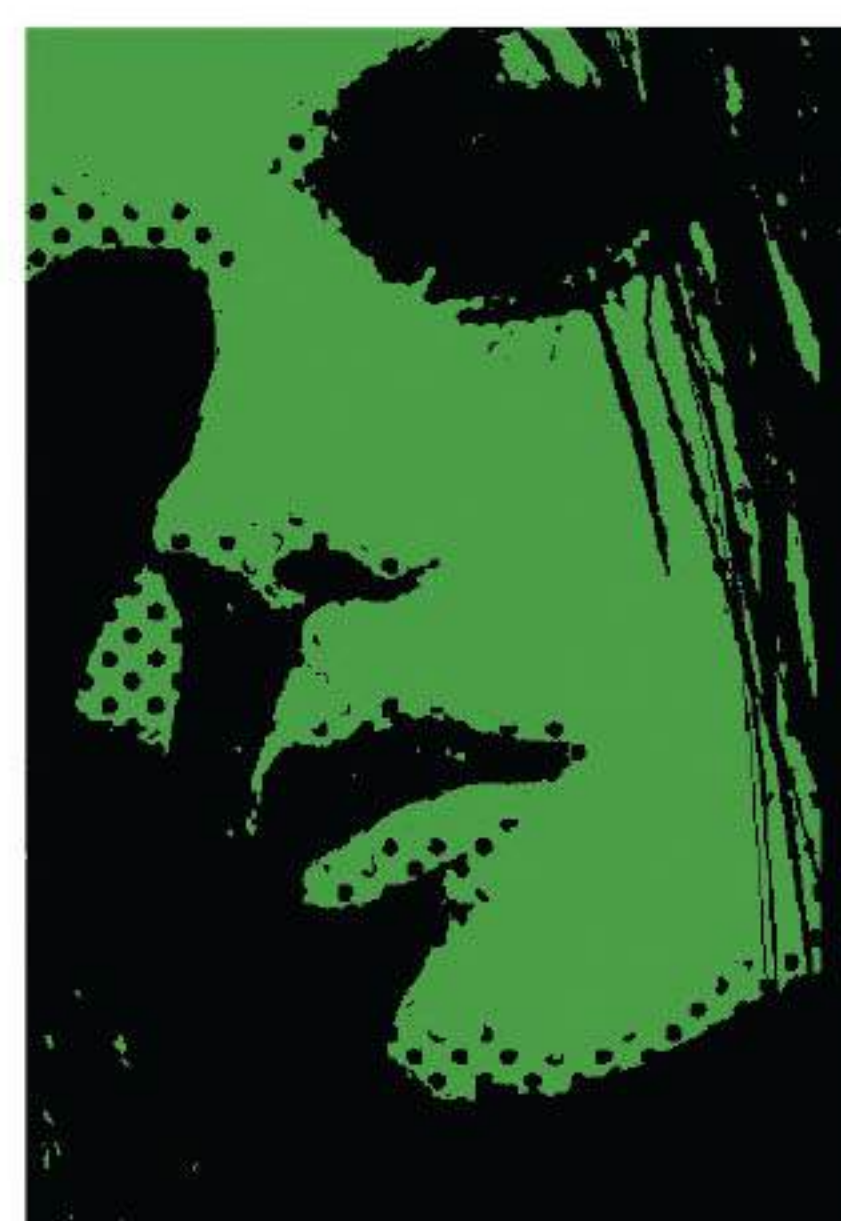
THE
IMMORTAL
IRON
FIST





THE PARTNER

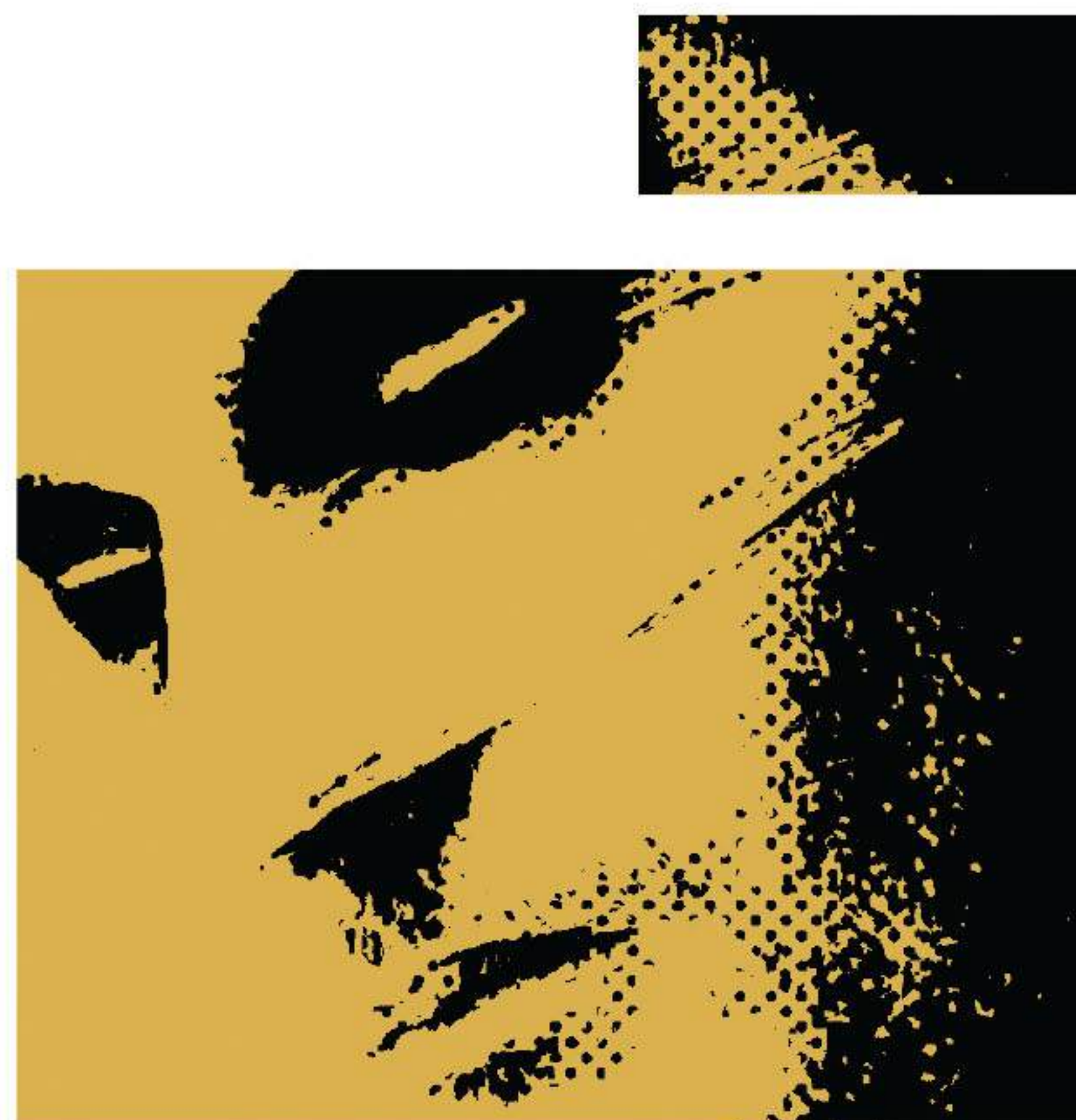
THE FRIEND



THE LOVER



THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST





They move as one.

Just like they've been trained.



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? YOUR MOMMY NEED TO SIGN A PERMISSION SLIP?

LET'S GO.

威風
光榮
勇氣
善意
忠誠

The goading doesn't shake them off their game.



Whatever edge I was hoping the trash talk might buy me...

Negligible at best.



Now there's nothing left to do but get a little bloodied...

COME ON!



They charge.

Fearlessly, relentlessly...they come at me...

The Thunder Dojo teaches its students no less.

I couldn't be prouder of them.

"Happy Birthday Danny"

Matt Fraction David Aja Matt Hollingsworth Dave Lanphear
Writer Art Color Art Letterer
Alejandro Arbona Warren Simons Joe Quesada Dan Buckley
Assistant Editor Editor Editor in Chief Publisher



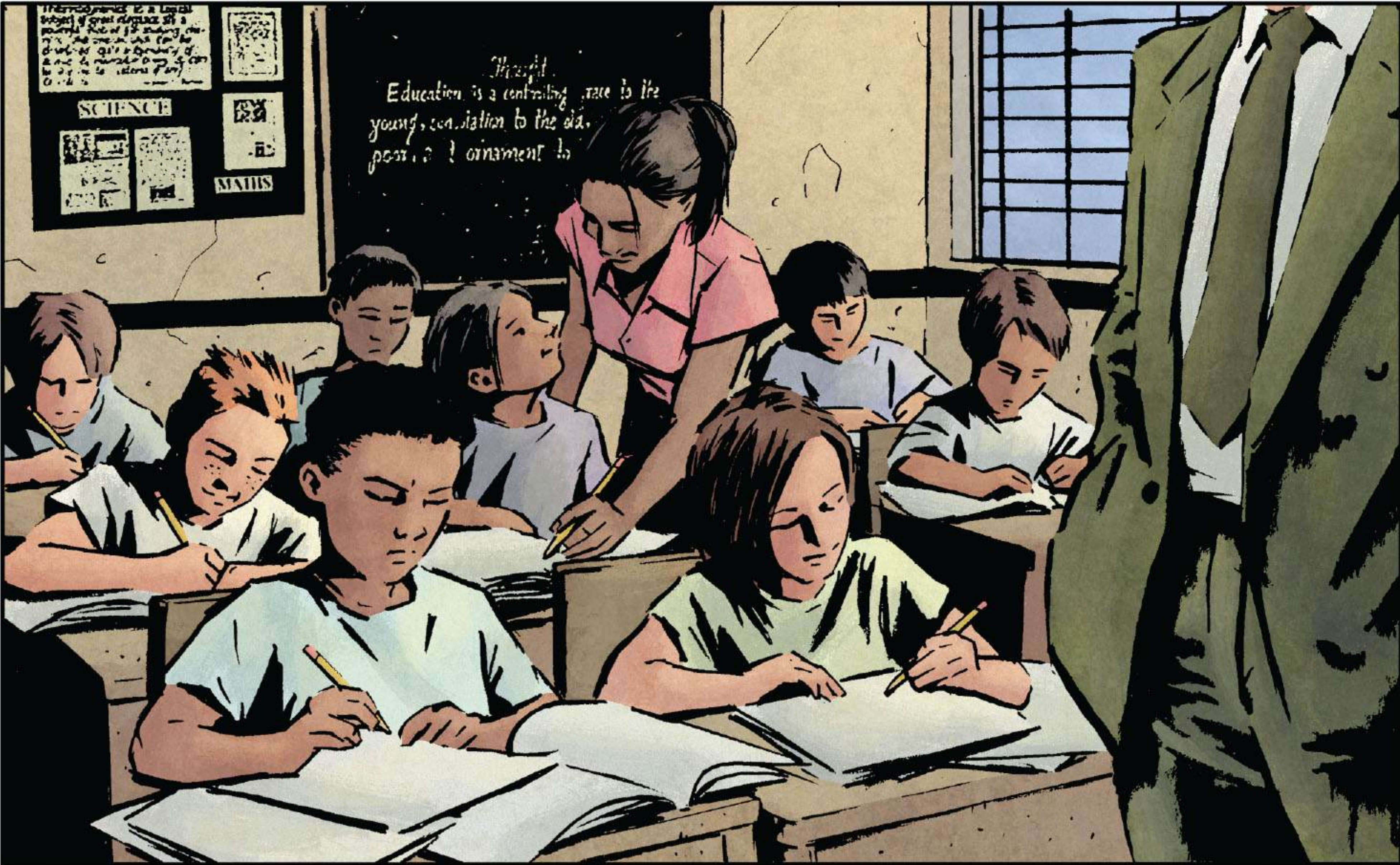
And it's a neighborhood full of kids...



...almost all of 'em needing a place like the **Dojo** to come after school.

We have tutors,
too, to help 'em
with schoolwork.

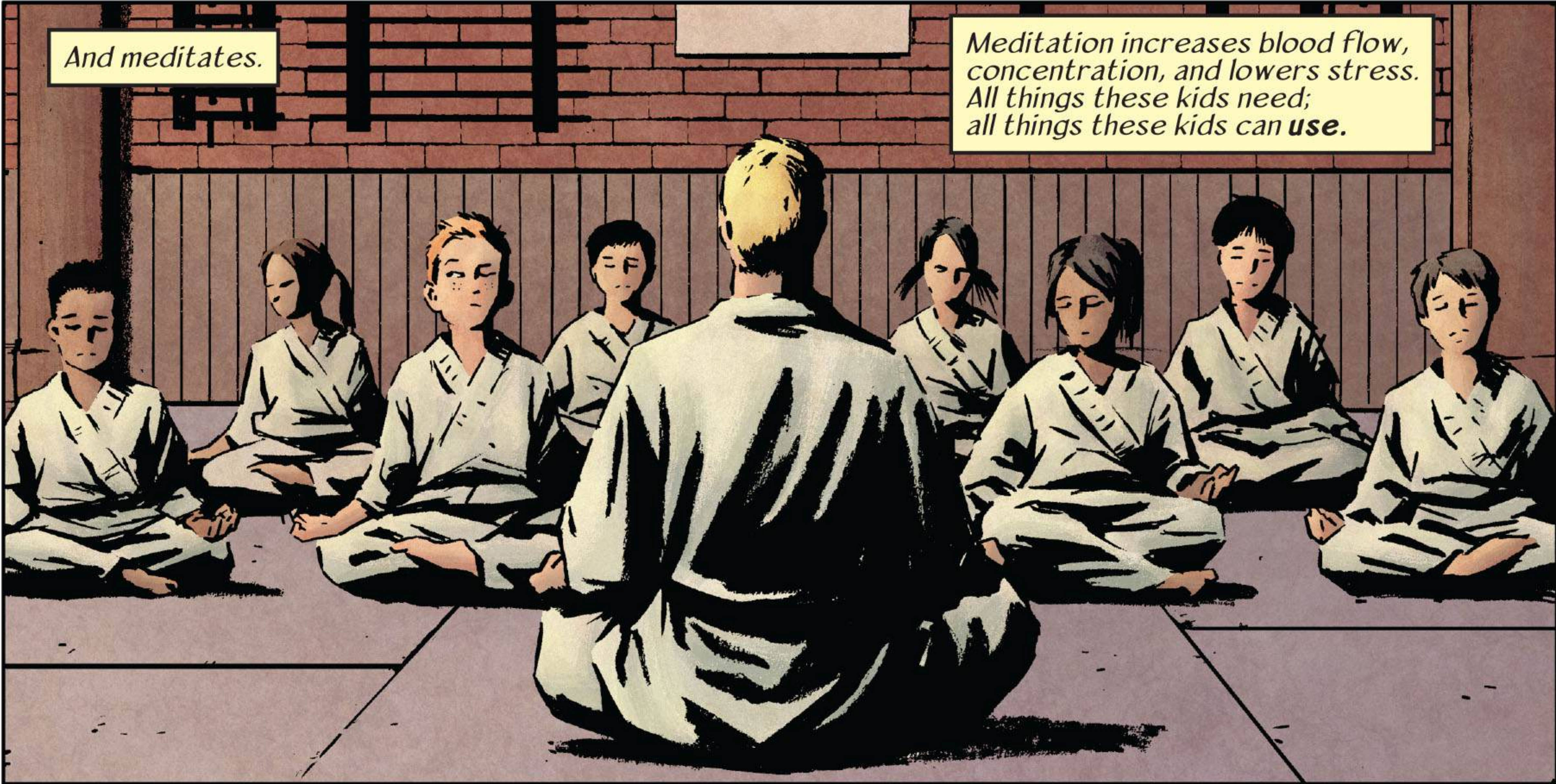
The better the
grades, the more
privileges they get.



Thirteen million-some
hungry kids in this country.
Although the government
doesn't call it "hungry."
The government calls it
being "food insecure."

Being "food insecure" ruins
health, raises infection rates,
creates **psychosocial** issues,
causes problems with
aggression, and absolutely
runs riot over academic
performance.

So here, everybody eats.



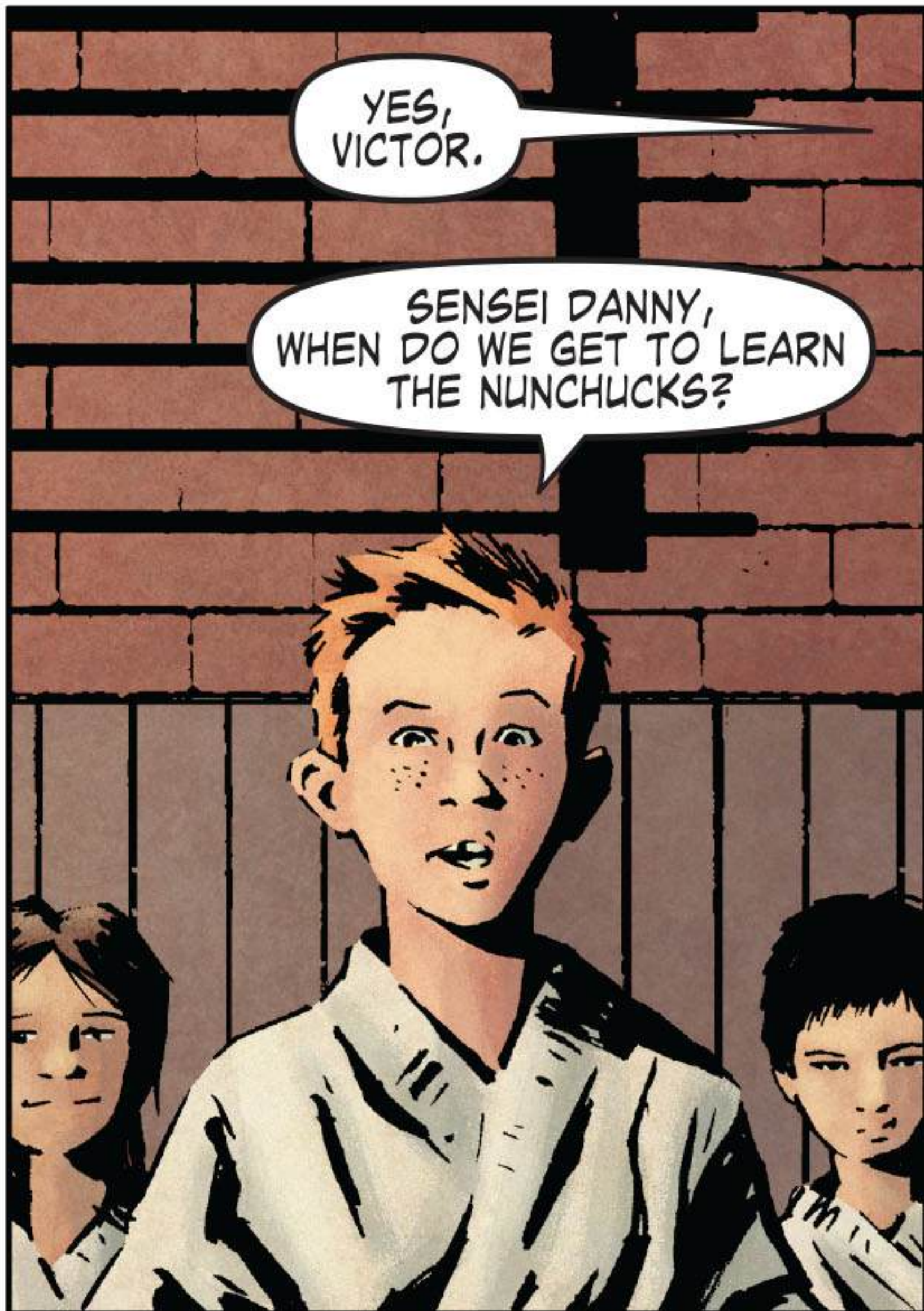
And meditates.

Meditation increases blood flow,
concentration, and lowers stress.
All things these kids need;
all things these kids can **use**.

Hell, after the
last few months,
I can use it, too.



SENSEI
DANNY...?

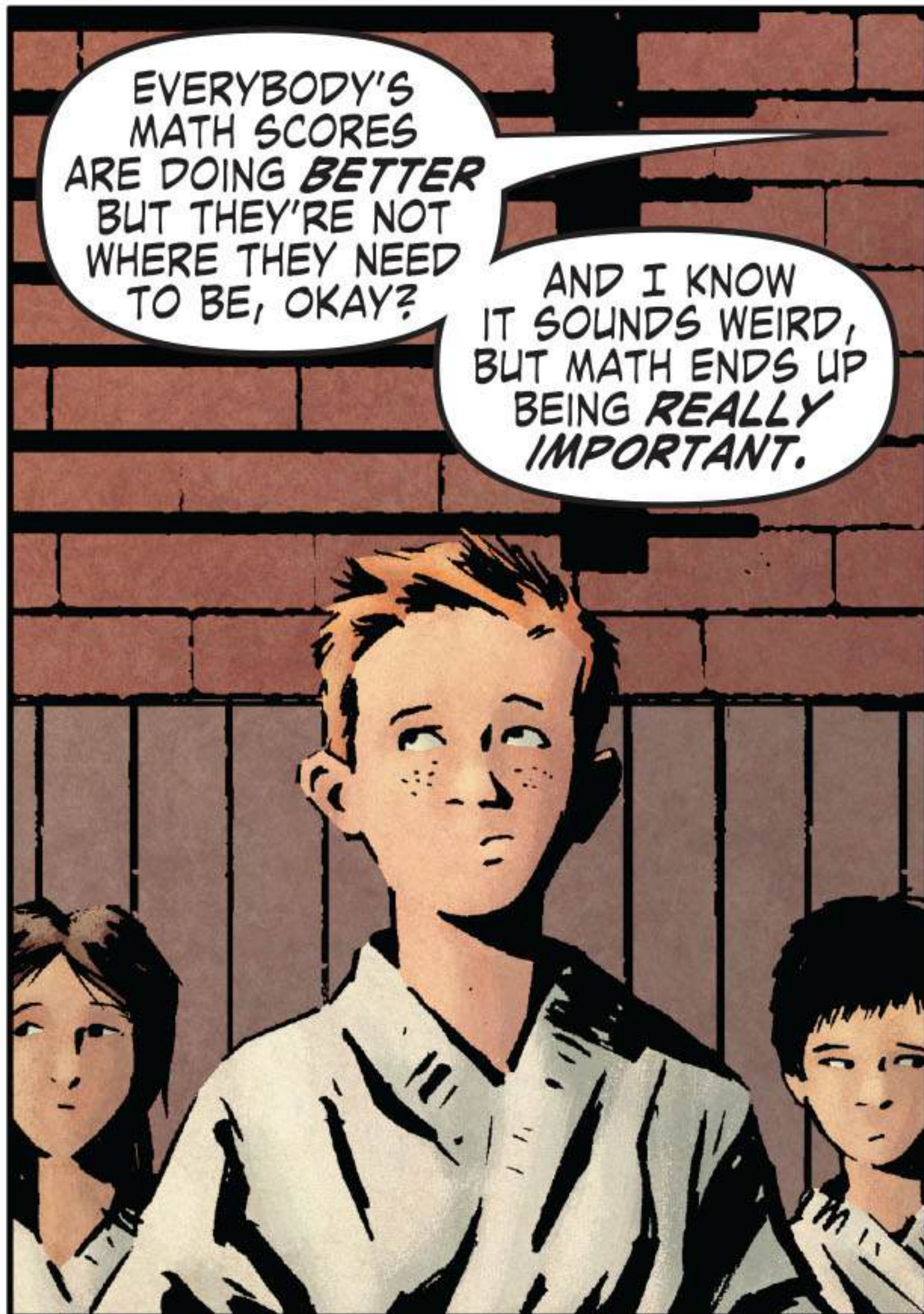


YES, VICTOR.

SENSEI DANNY, WHEN DO WE GET TO LEARN THE NUNCHUCKS?



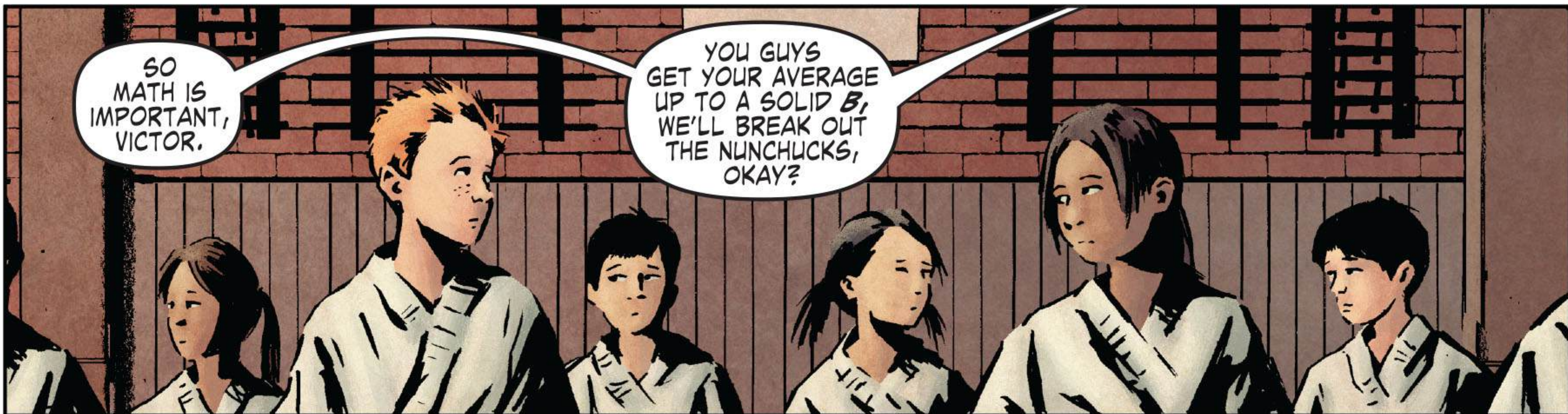
WELL, WHEN ARE YOUR MATH GRADES GOING TO HIT A B AVERAGE?



EVERYBODY'S MATH SCORES ARE DOING *BETTER* BUT THEY'RE NOT WHERE THEY NEED TO BE, OKAY?

AND I KNOW IT SOUNDS WEIRD, BUT MATH ENDS UP BEING *REALLY* IMPORTANT.

3.141592653589793238462643383279502884197169399375105820974944592307816
4062862... YOU THINK TO YOURSELF, OH, IT'S JUST MATH, HOW IMPORTANT CAN IT BE, I'M NOT GONNA BE A *BANKER*, I'LL JUST USE A CALCULATOR WHEN I'M A GROWN-UP, RIGHT?
53594... 102701938521105559644622948954... THEN ONE DAY SOMEONE GIVES YOU A FOLDER FULL OF NUMBERS THAT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO ADD UP AND IT TURNS OUT A CRAZY SUPER-VILLAIN IS TRYING TO TAKE OVER YOUR COMPANY.
6593... 6783165271201909145648566923...
3936... 8700660631558817488152092096...
25903... 04665213841469519415116094330...
8611738... 118548074462379962749567351885...
949129833673362440656643086021394946395224737190702...
7176293176752384674818467669405132000568127145263560...
09173637178721468440901224953430146549585371050792279689258923542019956



SO MATH IS IMPORTANT, VICTOR.

YOU GUYS GET YOUR AVERAGE UP TO A SOLID B, WE'LL BREAK OUT THE NUNCHUCKS, OKAY?



NUNCHUCKS!

MATH!

ELBOW STRIKES NEXT, GUYS-- HARD TO BLOCK AND DEVASTATING WHEN THEY CONNECT--!

I spend a few hours here most weekdays.

It's as often as I can manage with all the changes I've been making to *Rand International* lately...



Namely **gutting** it and **shutting it down**.

Multinational conglomerates are almost impossible to kill, as it turns out. Dismantling it piece by piece can take forever.



I found out the root of my family's fortune was the **Randall fortune**...

...and the Randall fortune was rooted in the blood and oppression of the people of not just K'un-Lun, but of all of the **Capital Cities of Heaven**...



So I'm giving it away.

Every blood-soaked dime.



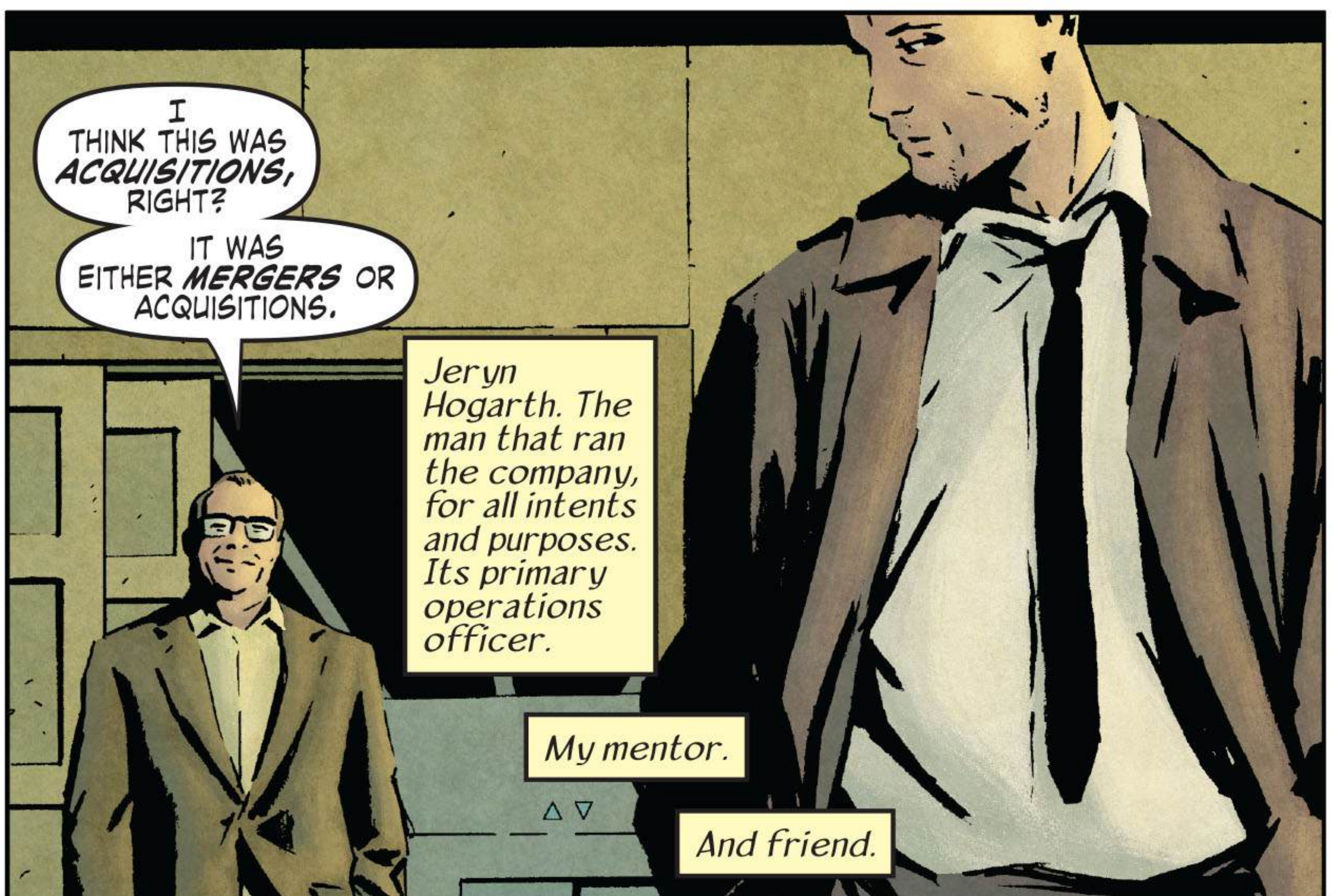
I'm turning **Rand** into the world's largest and most deeply funded not-for-profit charitable organization.

I'll spend the rest of my life doing my best to die broke.

Transforming us from this into that, though...
...means there's a whole lot of **changes** happening on every level.



WHAT **DEPARTMENT** DID THIS USED TO BE, DANNY?



I THINK THIS WAS **ACQUISITIONS**, RIGHT?

IT WAS EITHER **MERGERS** OR **ACQUISITIONS**.

Jeryn Hogarth. The man that ran the company, for all intents and purposes. Its primary operations officer.

My mentor.

And friend.



ACQUISITIONS.

MERGERS WAS ON *EIGHT*. I KNOW BECAUSE WE *BLEW IT UP* WHEN XAO AND DAVOS ATTACKED.



COST A FORTUNE TO BUILD ALL THOSE CUSTOM DESKS.

EH. WE'LL REBUILD 'EM ALL AGAIN IN THE *NEW* HEADQUARTERS.

YEAH.

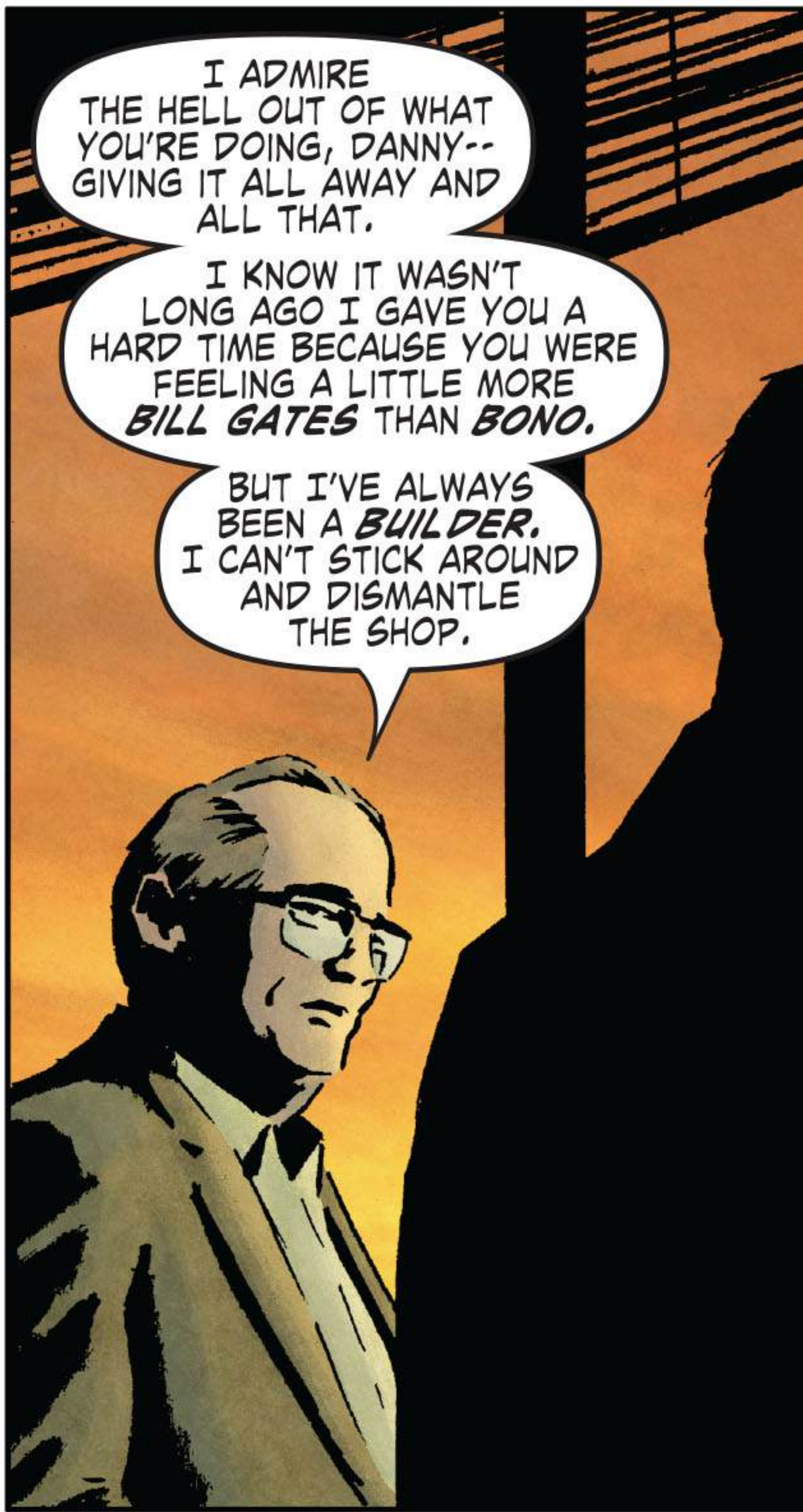
ABOUT THAT, DANNY...



I NEED TO GO.

DAVOS AND XAO DIDN'T JUST BLOW UP *MERGERS*, DANNY. THEY HURT MY *MOM*.

AND I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WORKING TOWARD THESE DAYS AND... AND IT'S NOT FOR ME ANYMORE.



I ADMIRE THE HELL OUT OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING, DANNY-- GIVING IT ALL AWAY AND ALL THAT.

I KNOW IT WASN'T LONG AGO I GAVE YOU A HARD TIME BECAUSE YOU WERE FEELING A LITTLE MORE *BILL GATES* THAN *BONO*.

BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A *BUILDER*. I CAN'T STICK AROUND AND DISMANTLE THE SHOP.



THERE'LL BE A YOU-SHAPED HOLE HERE WITHOUT YOU.

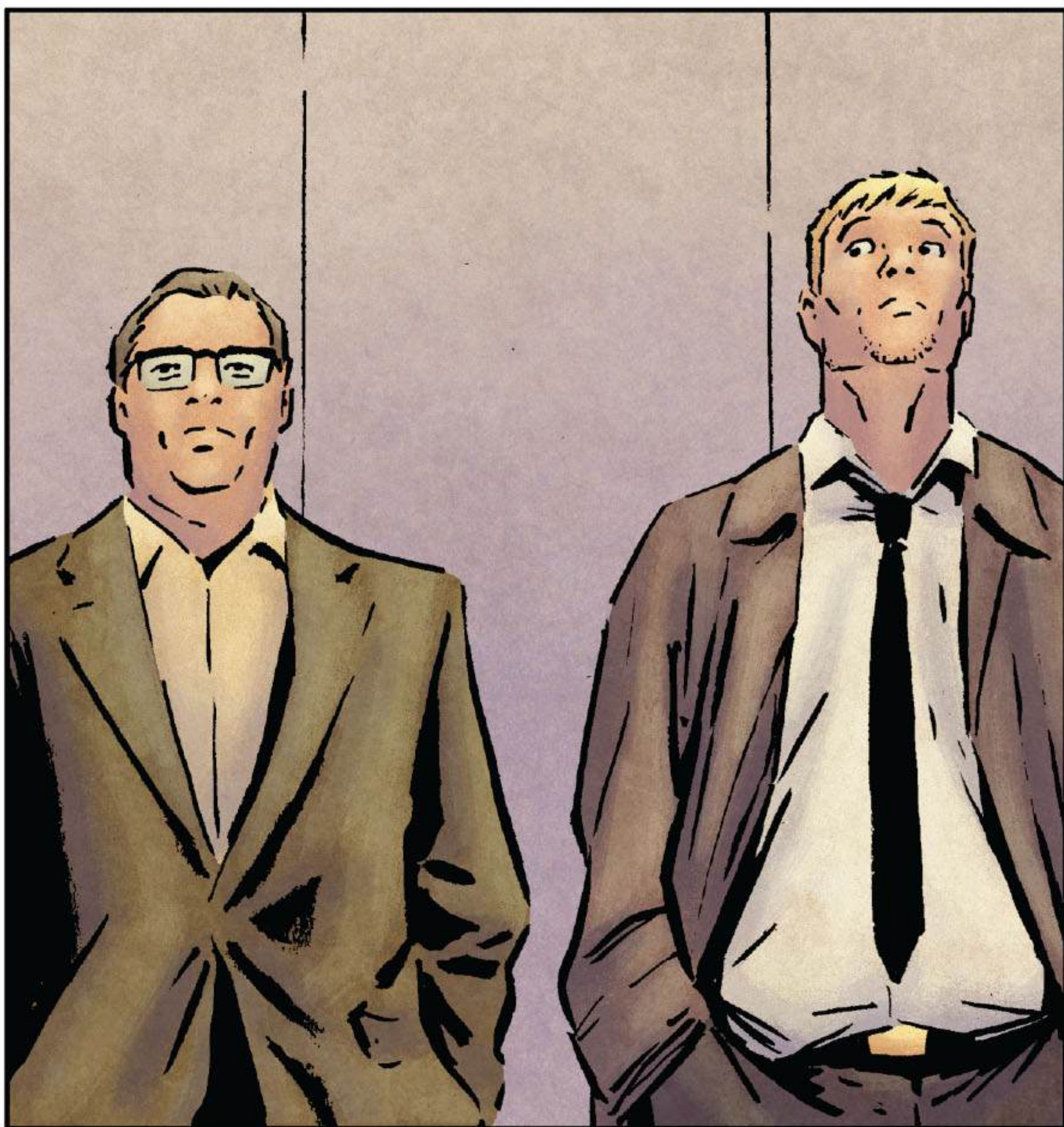
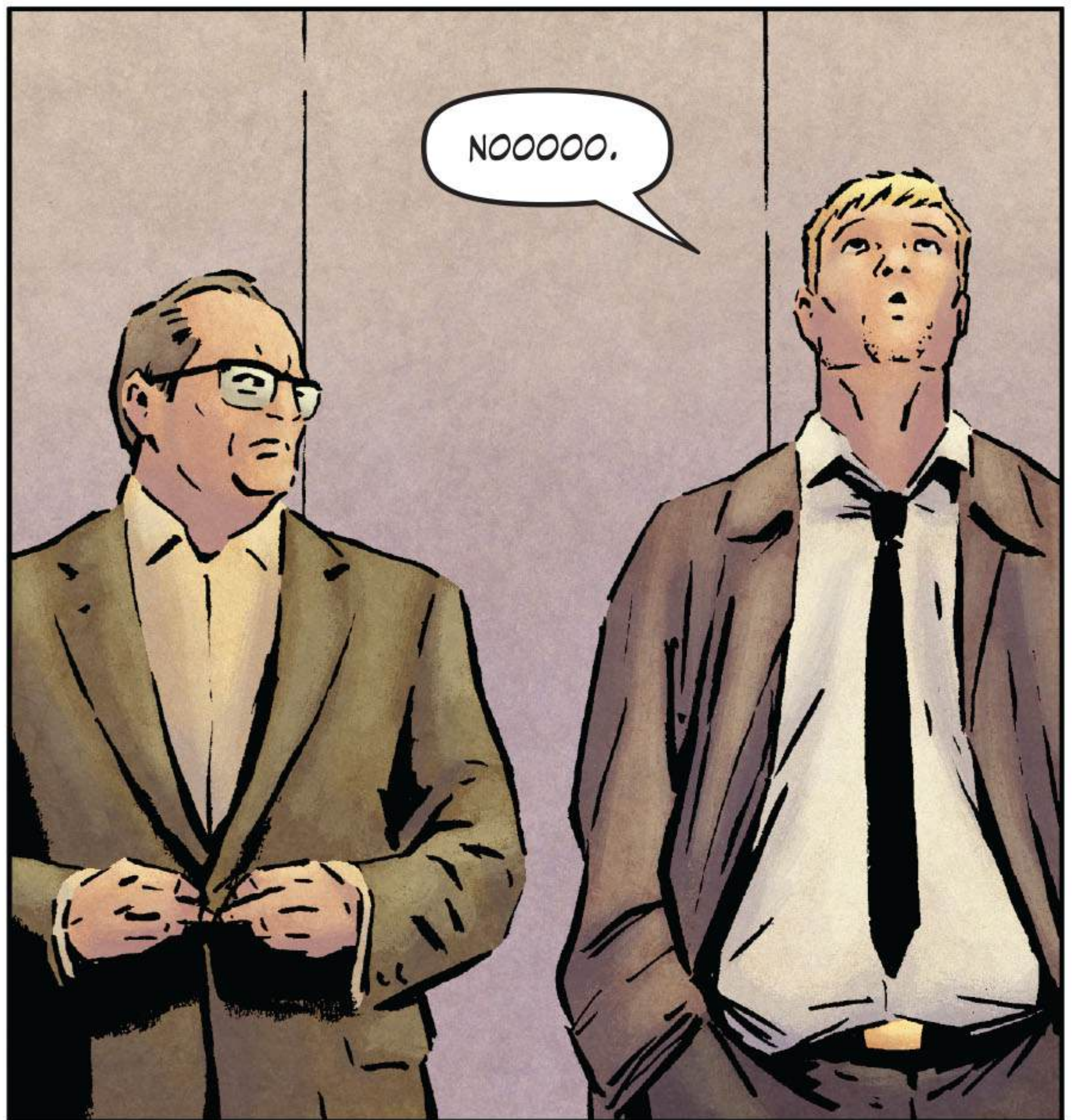
YOU WERE THE HEART AND SOUL OF THIS PLACE, JERYN.



NO I WASN'T, DANNY. YOU WERE.

YOU ALWAYS WERE.

...
I WAS THE BRAINS.





YEAH? HAVE YOU FOUND THE EIGHTH CITY?

The Iron Fist is the **Immortal Weapon** of the mystical city of K'un-Lun...one of **seven weapons**, from one of **seven cities**, that each appear on Earth in an arcane celestial sequence.

John Aman-- the Prince of Orphans.

Me.

Fat Cobra.

Bride of Nine Spiders.

Tiger's beautiful daughter.

Dog Brother #1.

We Weapons were made to combat each other in a dimension-spanning kung fu tournament.

A madman named Xao tried to destroy K'un-Lun, and the other cities, until we joined together and fought him back.

WE
CANNOT PROVE
IT A *LIE*.

Before he died...Xao
spoke of an ***eighth*** city.

THAT'S
YOUR NEWS?
WE CAN'T PROVE
IT ***DOESN'T***
EXIST?

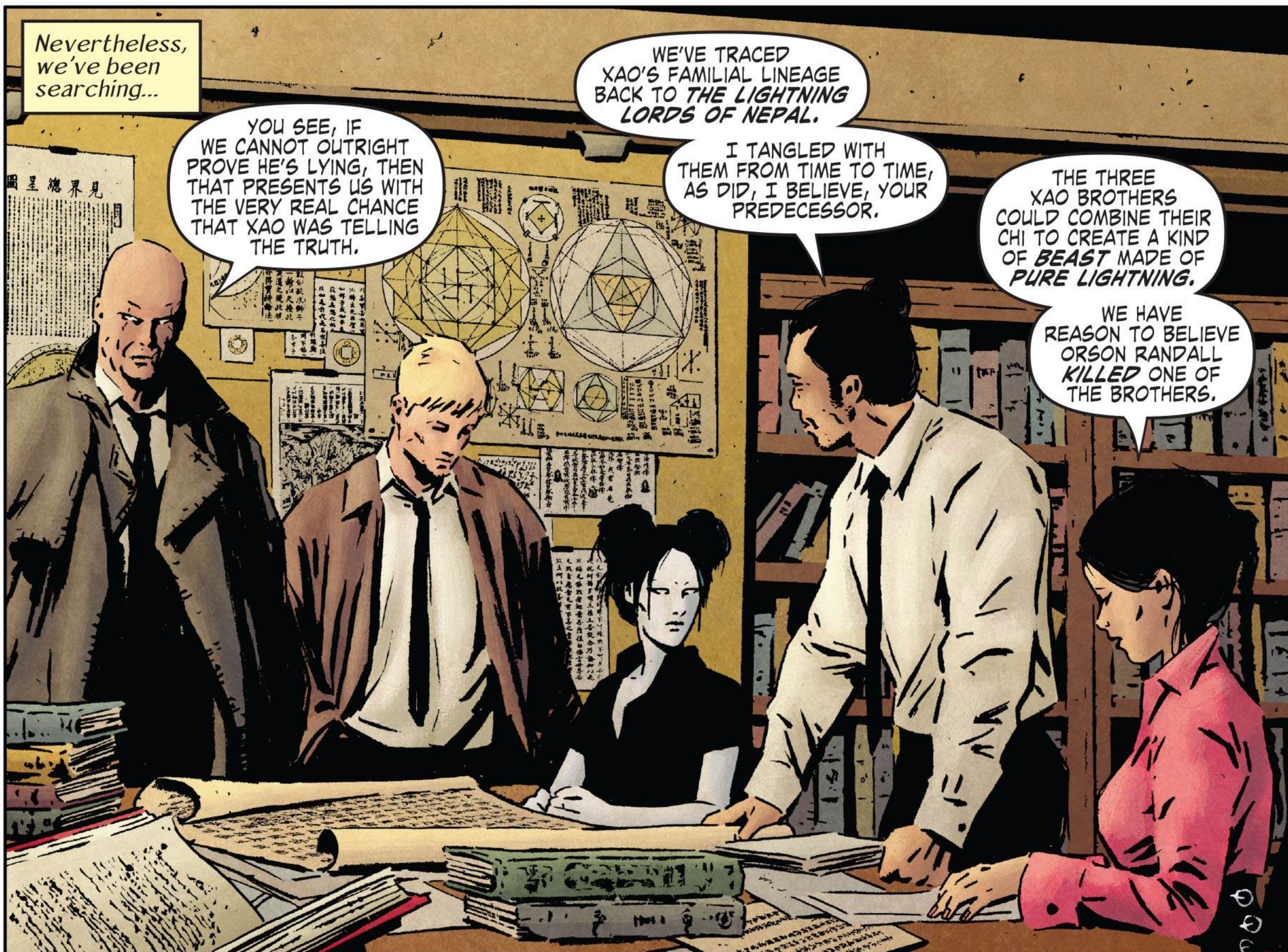
It has...***vexed***
us...to put it mildly.

Some of the Weapons left
their homes and returned
to New York, with me, to
seek the city out...

...although I suspect some of them just wanted to spend a little time here.

DANNY RAND!
JOIN US IN THE
SCOURING OF THESE
MANY SCROLLS!

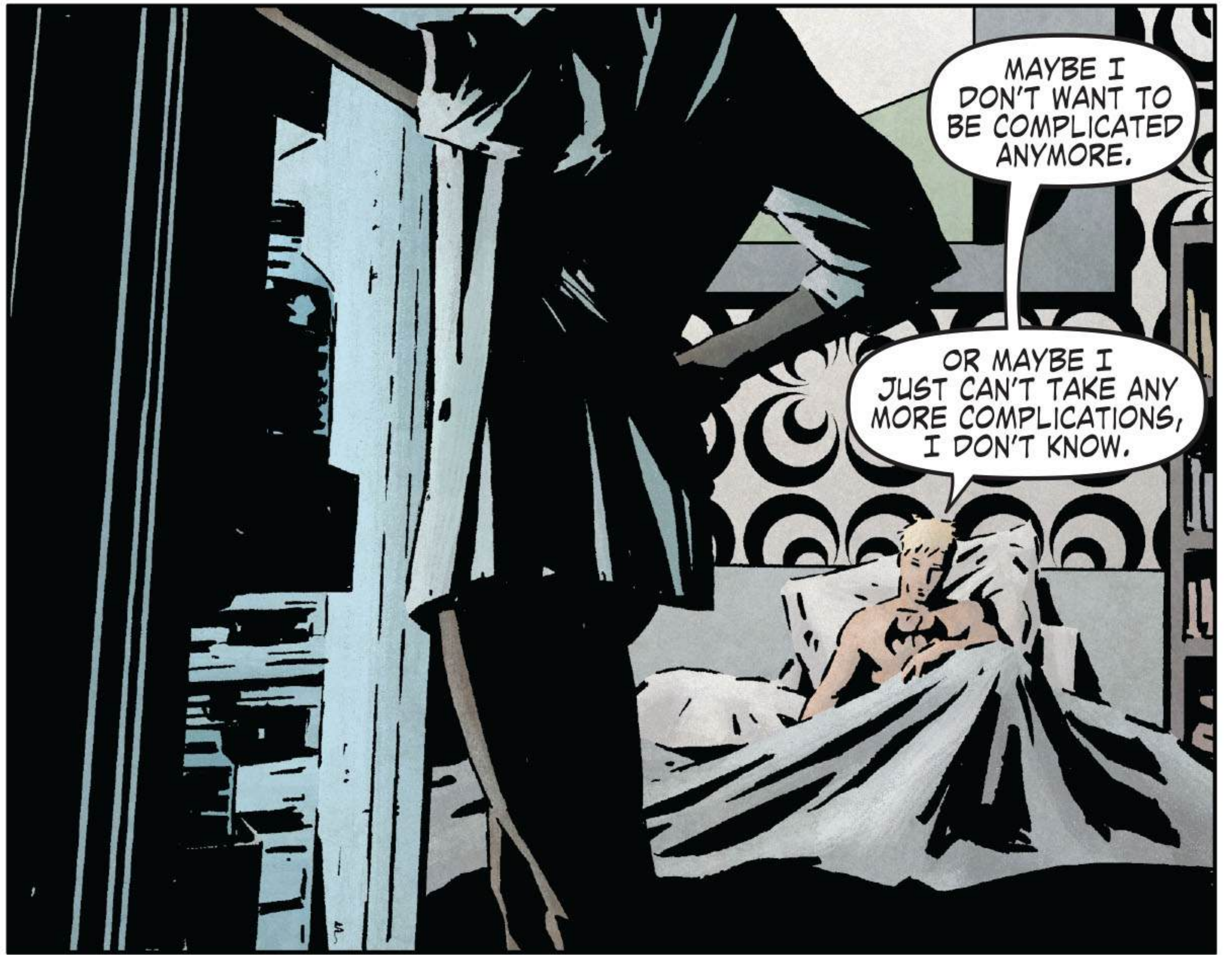
ALREADY I HAVE
LEARNED SEVERAL *LOST
LANGUAGES* AND OF
SEVERAL FASCINATING
MYTH CYCLES!



III KNOW WHAAAT
DAY ITTT ISSS,
DANNIEL RANNND.











THE CHI OF SHOU-LAO, THE TECHNIQUES I'VE ACQUIRED--

WAIT, WAS THAT A RHETORICAL QUESTION?



LUKE, BUDDY, I LOVE YOU. WITH EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING, YOU KNOW THAT.

AND WHEN WE WORKED HERE, BACK IN THE DAY--

--THOSE WERE SOME OF THE BEST DAYS OF MY LIFE.



FIRST HONEST DAY OF WORK I EVER DID, I DID FOR YOU. BACK WHEN THIS WAS *THE DEUCE* AND NOT DISNEY'S NEW YORK, NEW YORK--

WE DID A LOT OF GOOD *HELPING PEOPLE*, MAN. REAL PEOPLE, WITH REAL PROBLEMS.

AND THE AVENGERS STUFF IS GREAT--I LOVE, Y'KNOW, FIGHTING *KANG* AND STUFF WITH YOU GUYS. I DON'T WANT TO STOP THAT.

BUT ASK A FAMILY THAT LIVES UNDER A BRIDGE ABOUT *KANG*, AND THEY JUST WANT THEIR KID TO EAT TONIGHT, Y'KNOW?



WORK WITH ME. LET THE NEW *RAND* CUT YOU A PAYCHECK, AND LET'S SPEND SOME TIME ON THE STREET HELPING REAL FOLKS GET BY AGAIN.

BESIDES, THE DAMN BUILDING COST ME A FORTUNE TO BUY BACK. I'M GONNA FEEL LIKE AN IDIOT IF I'M IN THERE ALONE.



ALL RIGHT, PARTNER. ALL RIGHT.

I never get around to telling him that I don't sleep much at all anymore.

I've got too much to do these days...



It started off as a veterans' outreach.

But then you get down to the homeless camps and--well, how do you tell one guy he gets some food because he served, and another guy he doesn't because he didn't?

Surviving everything--the attack on Rand, Xao, the kung fu tournament... all of it just brought the rest of my life into focus.

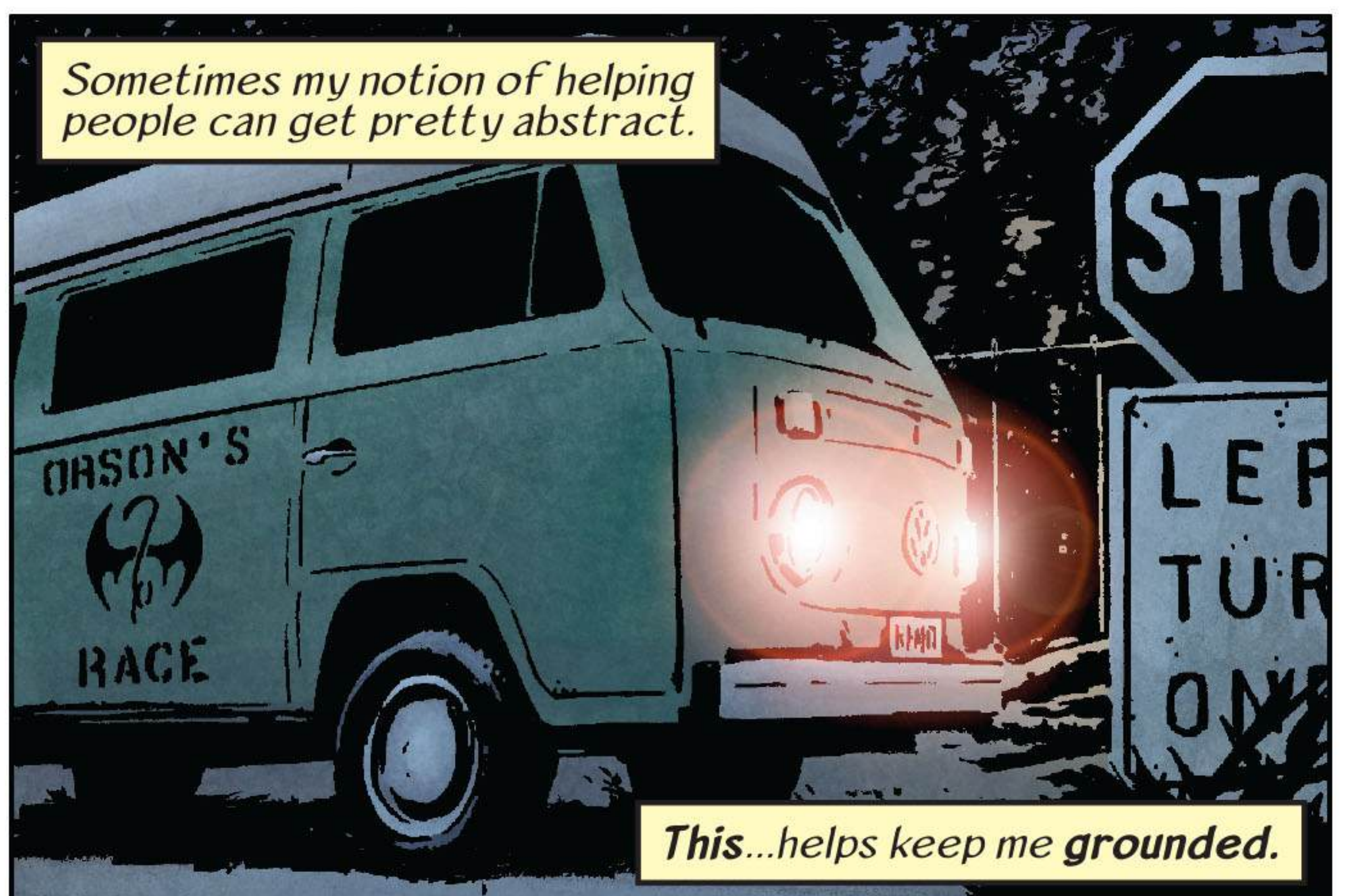


So a few times a week we load up the van and go around to the homeless camps.

It seems, quite literally some nights, like the absolute least I can do.



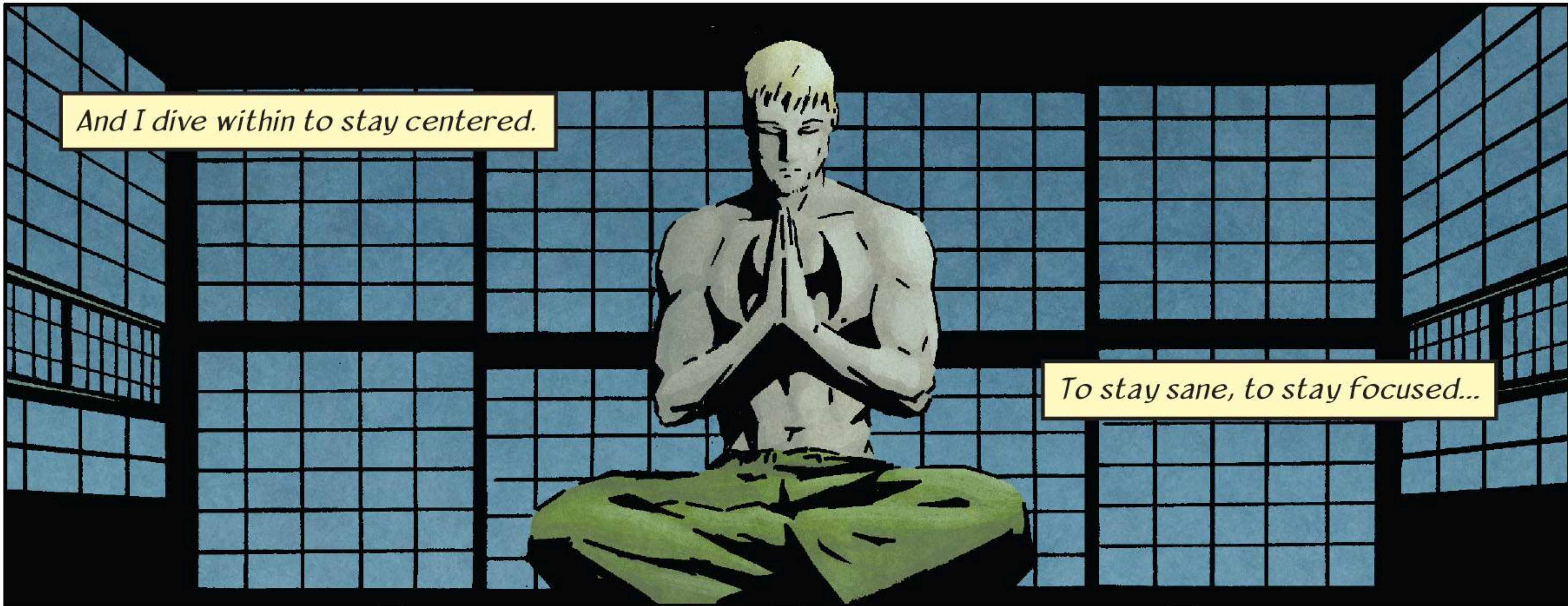
Sometimes my notion of helping people can get pretty abstract.



This...helps keep me grounded.

I'm the scion of a centuries-spanning kung fu dynasty and a billionaire.





And I dive within to stay centered.

To stay sane, to stay focused...



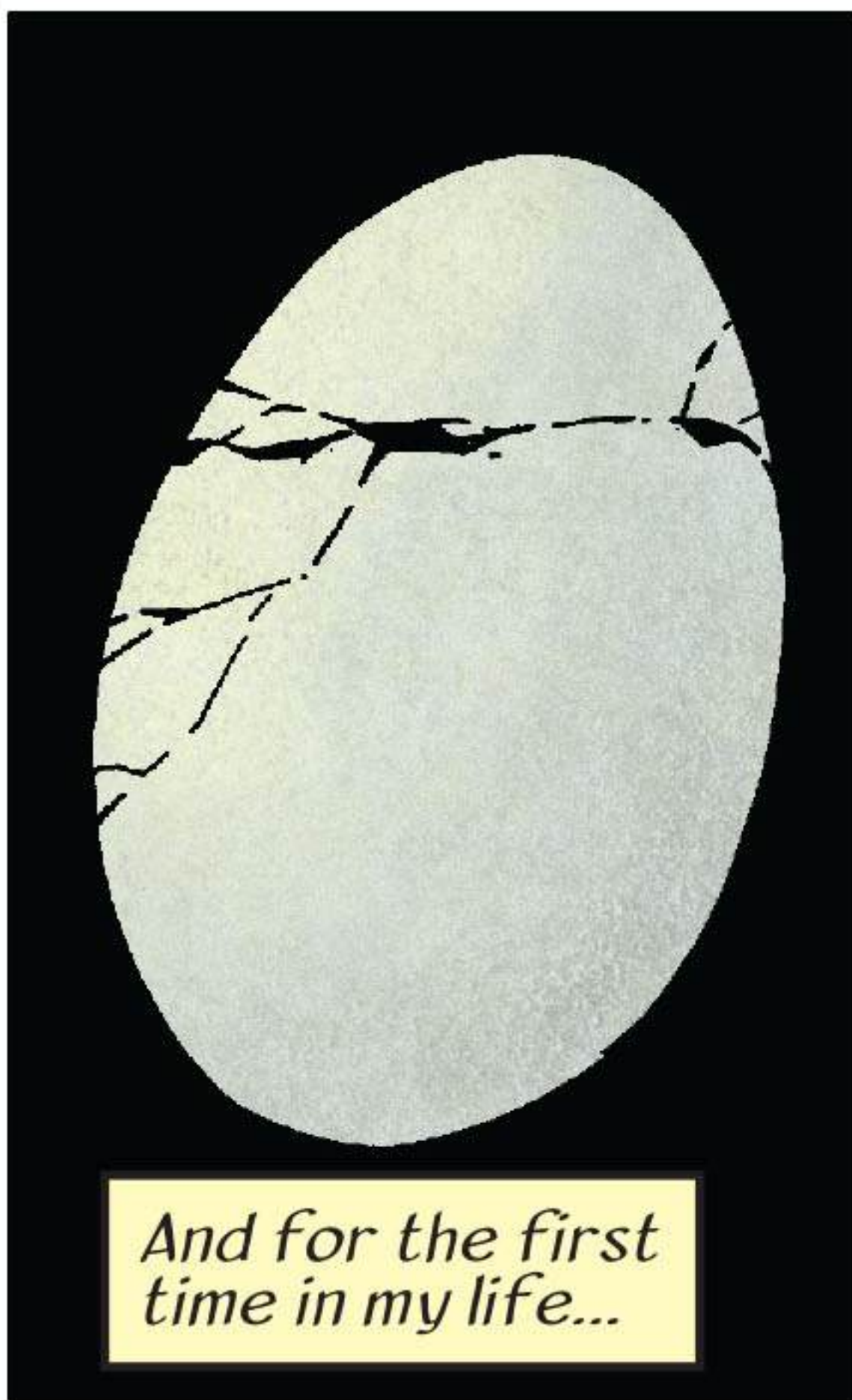
...I dive into the chi of Shou-Lao...



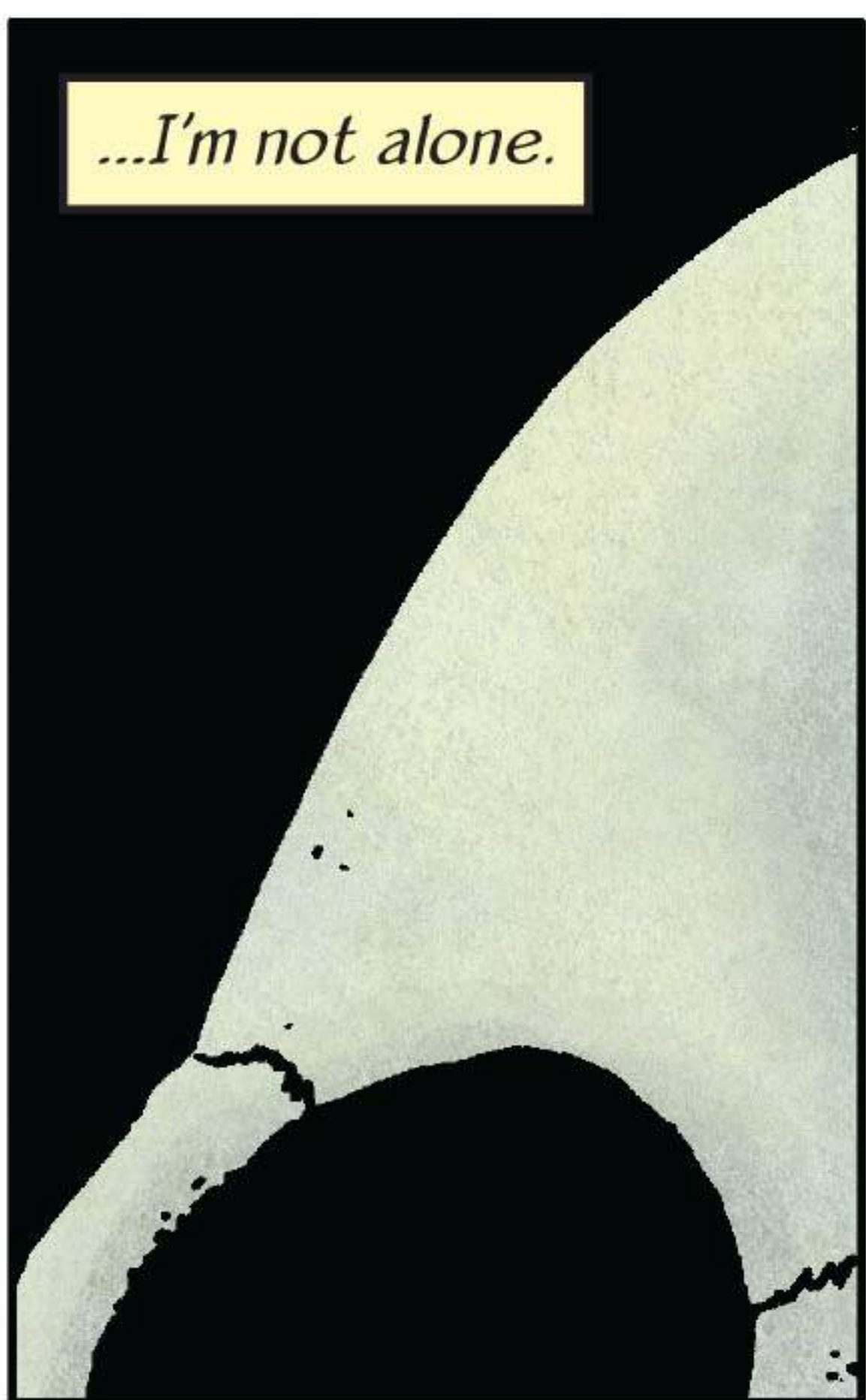
...into myself, into my...



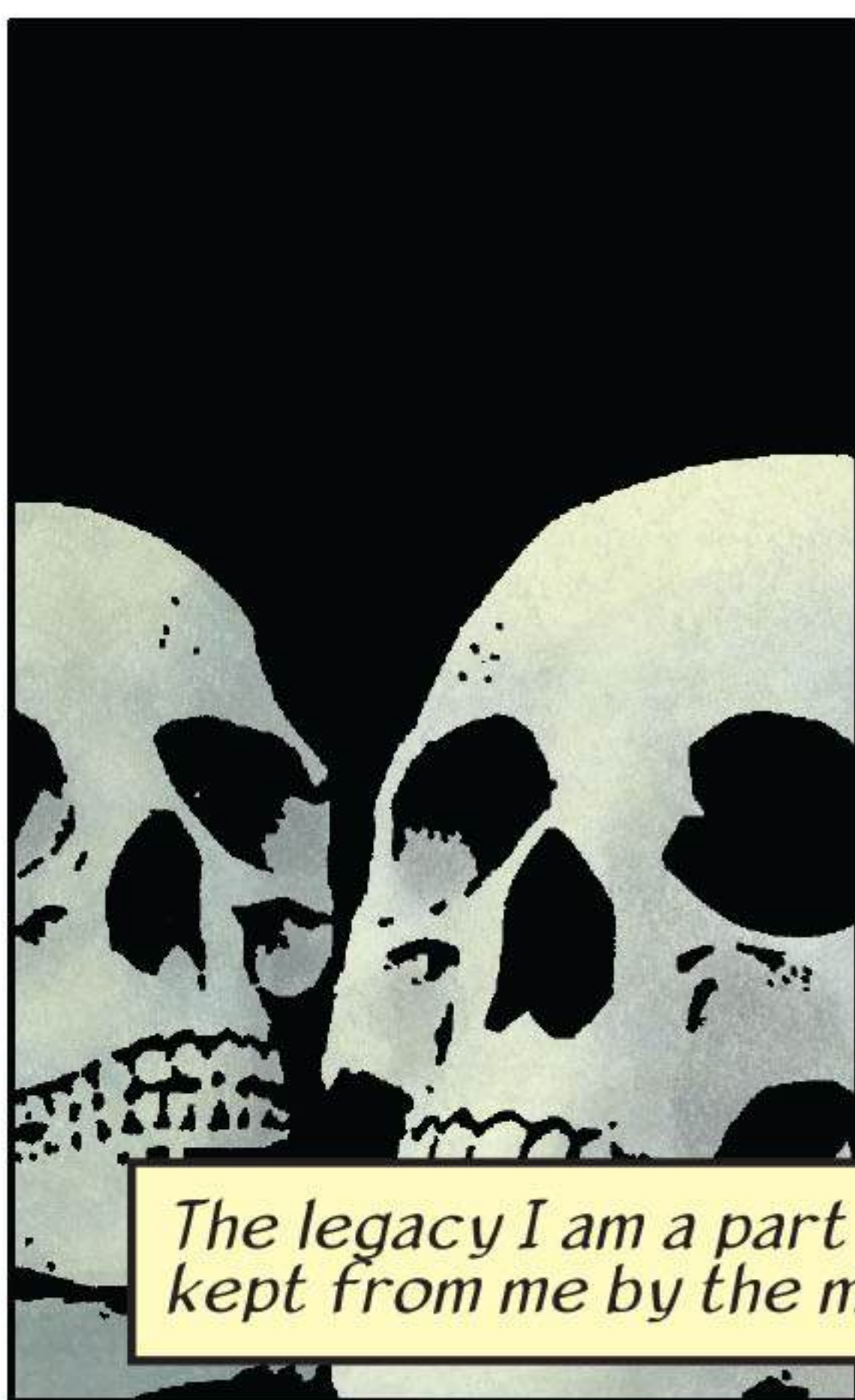
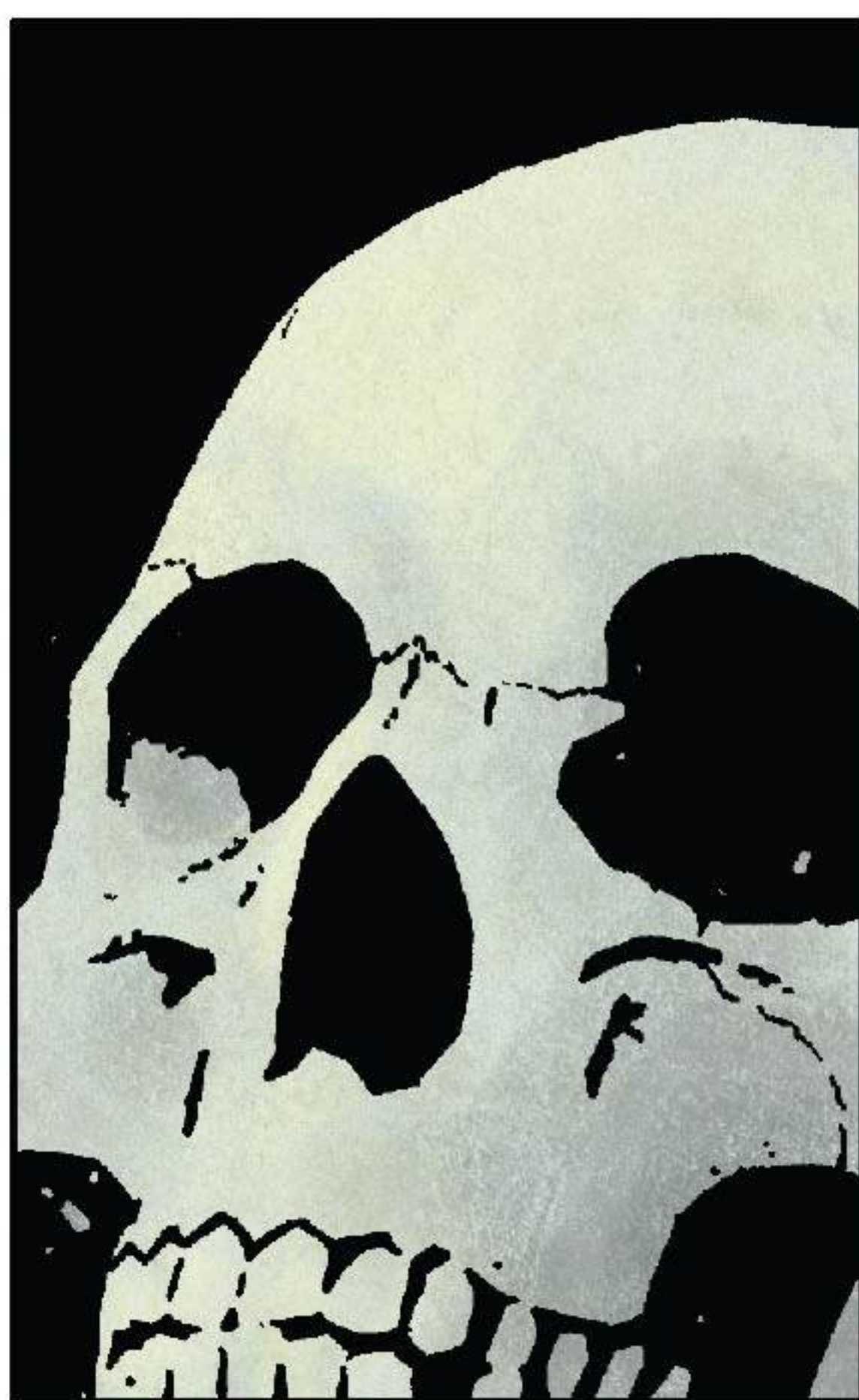
...into my soul.



And for the first time in my life...



...I'm not alone.

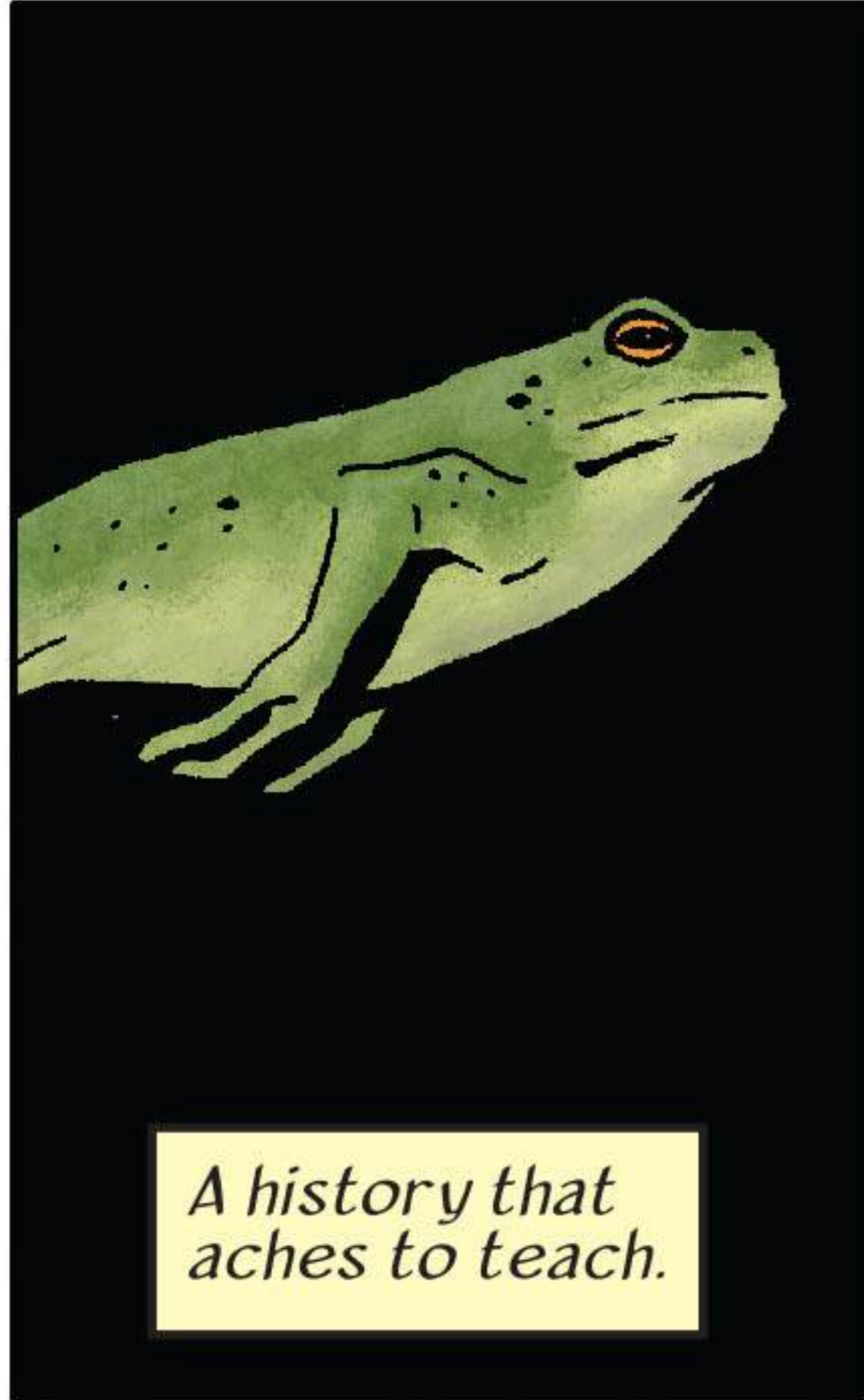


The legacy I am a part of is no longer a secret kept from me by the mysterious and powerful...

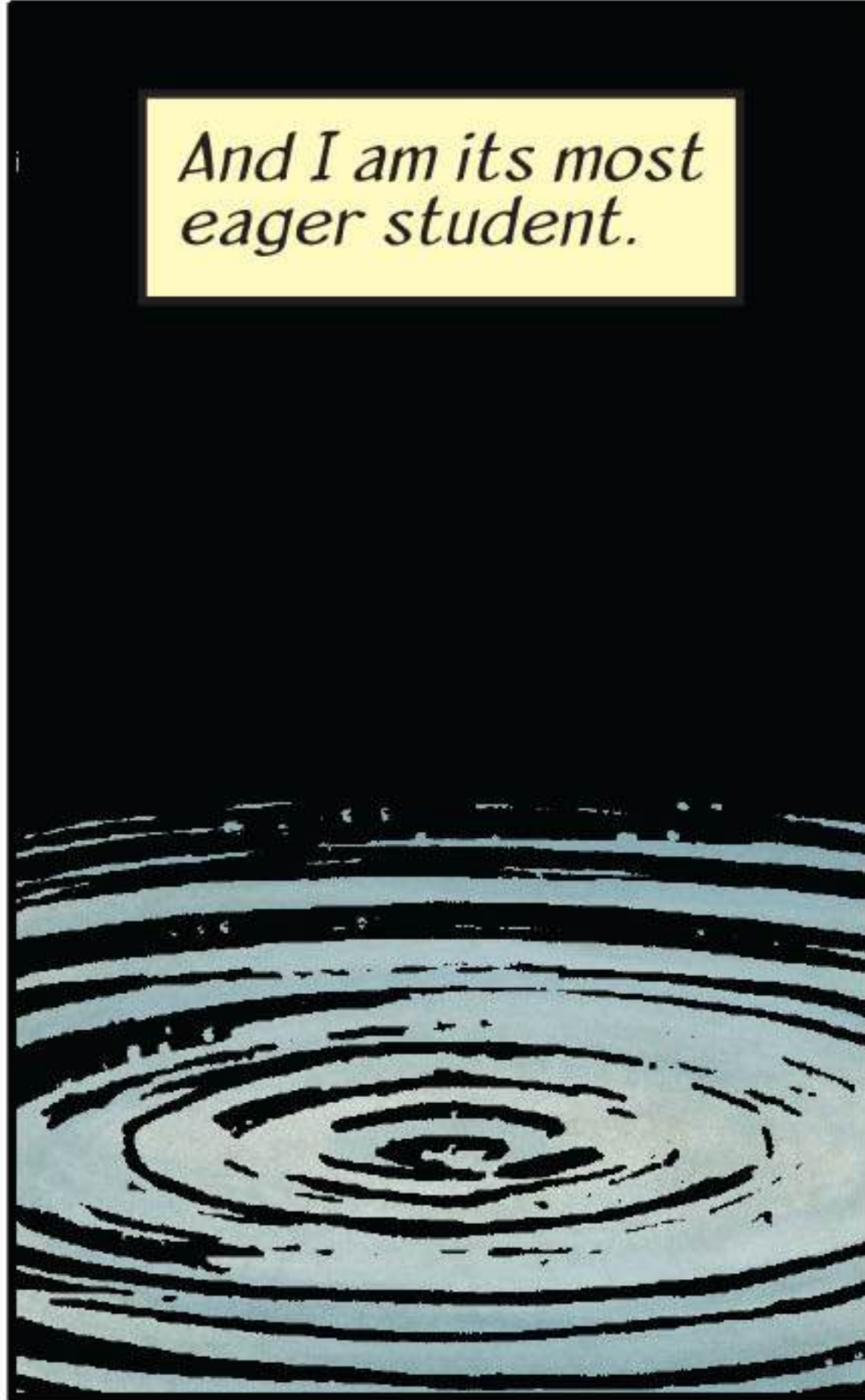




...but a **family** that welcomes me if I just reach out to them.



A history that aches to teach.



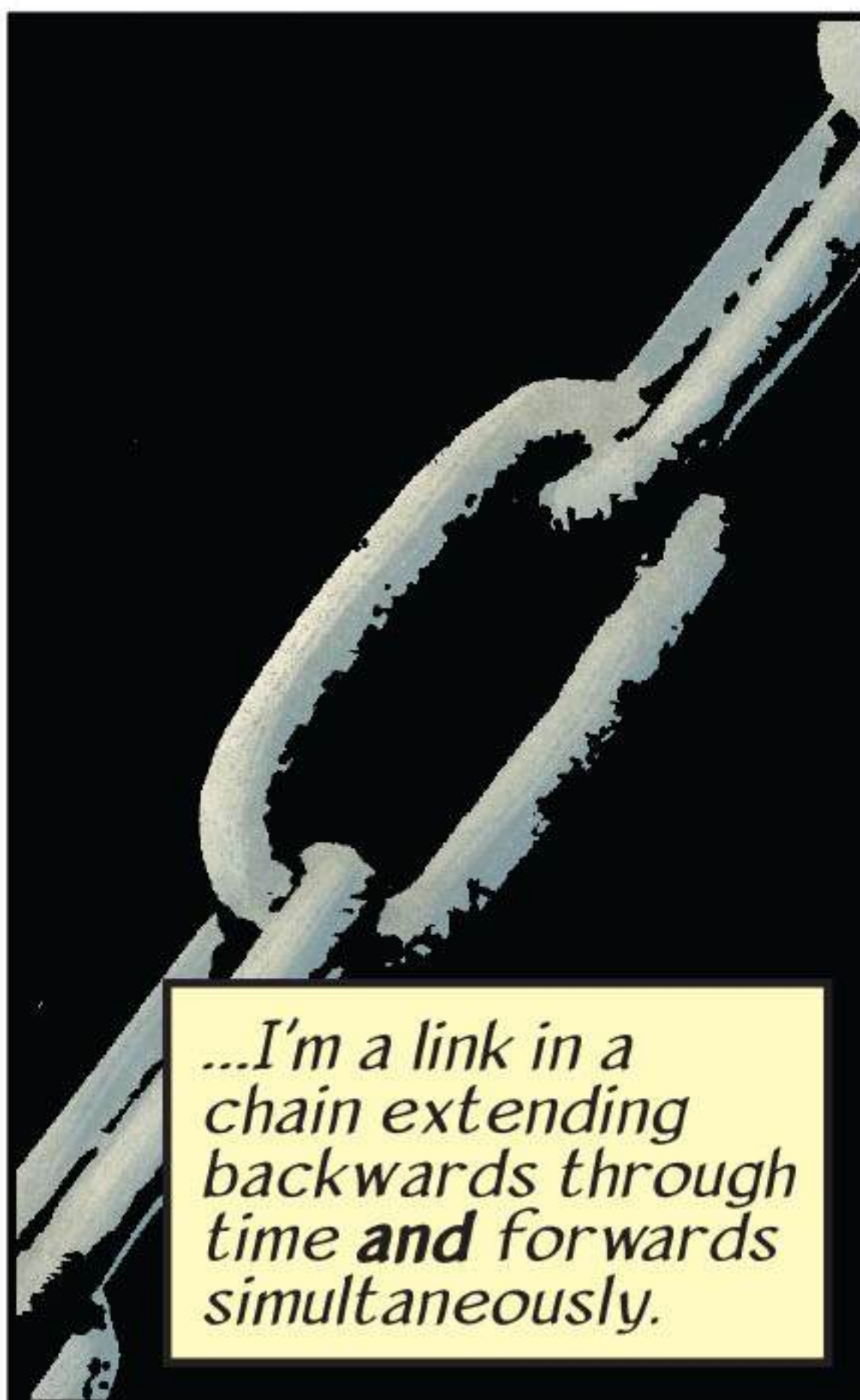
And I am its most eager student.



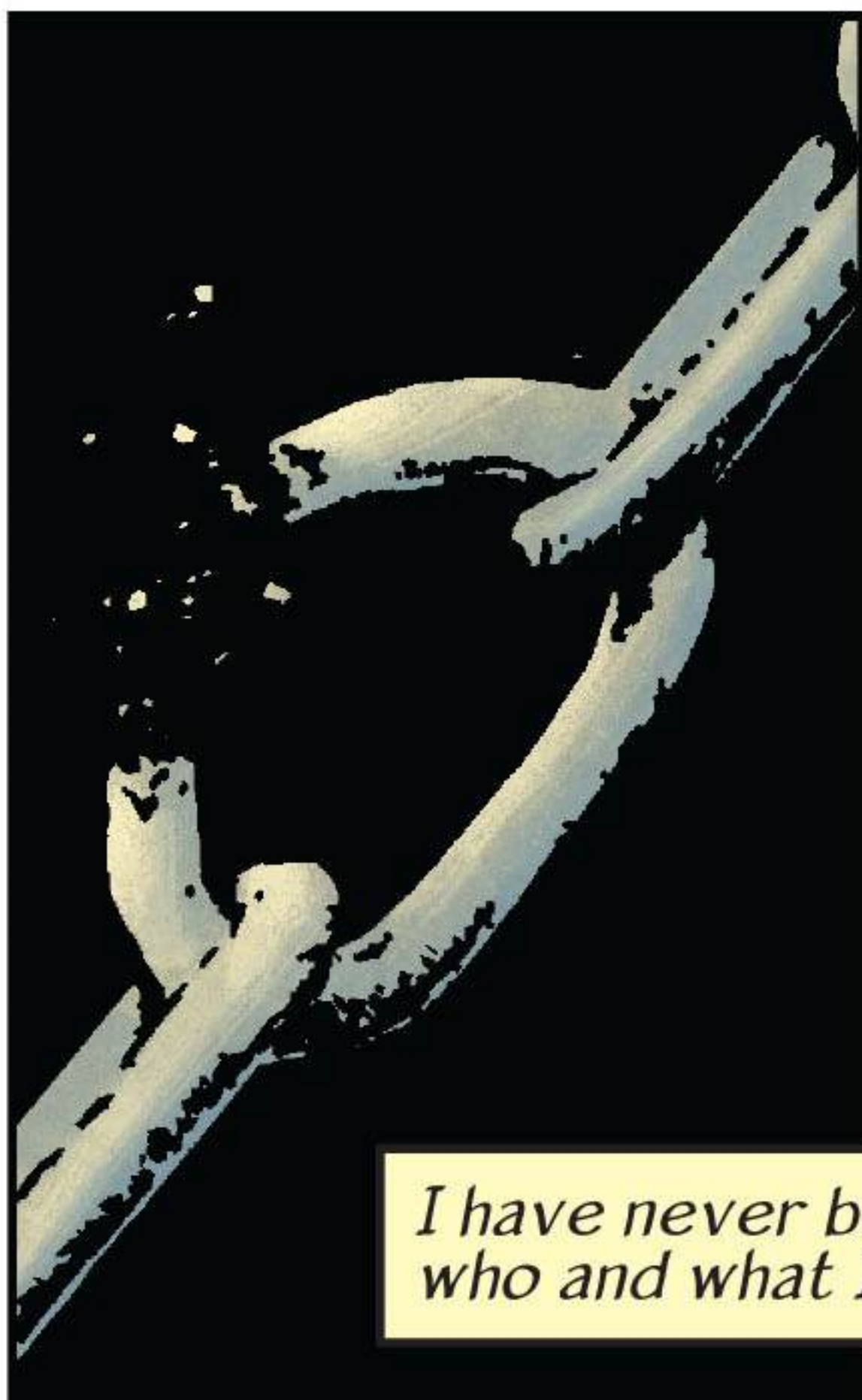
I barely remember a time when I didn't feel like an orphan, an **outworlder**, a tourist, or an impostor.



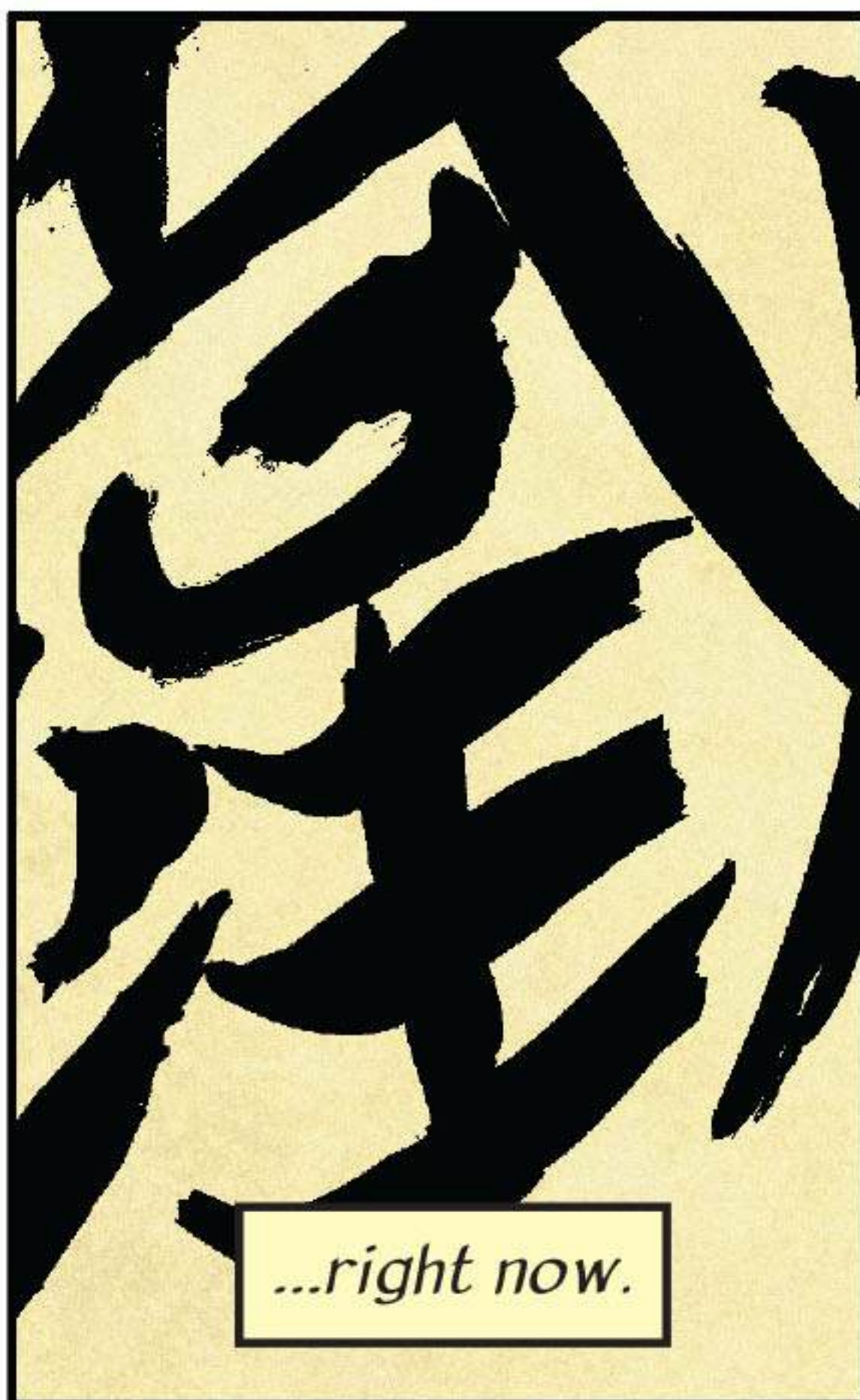
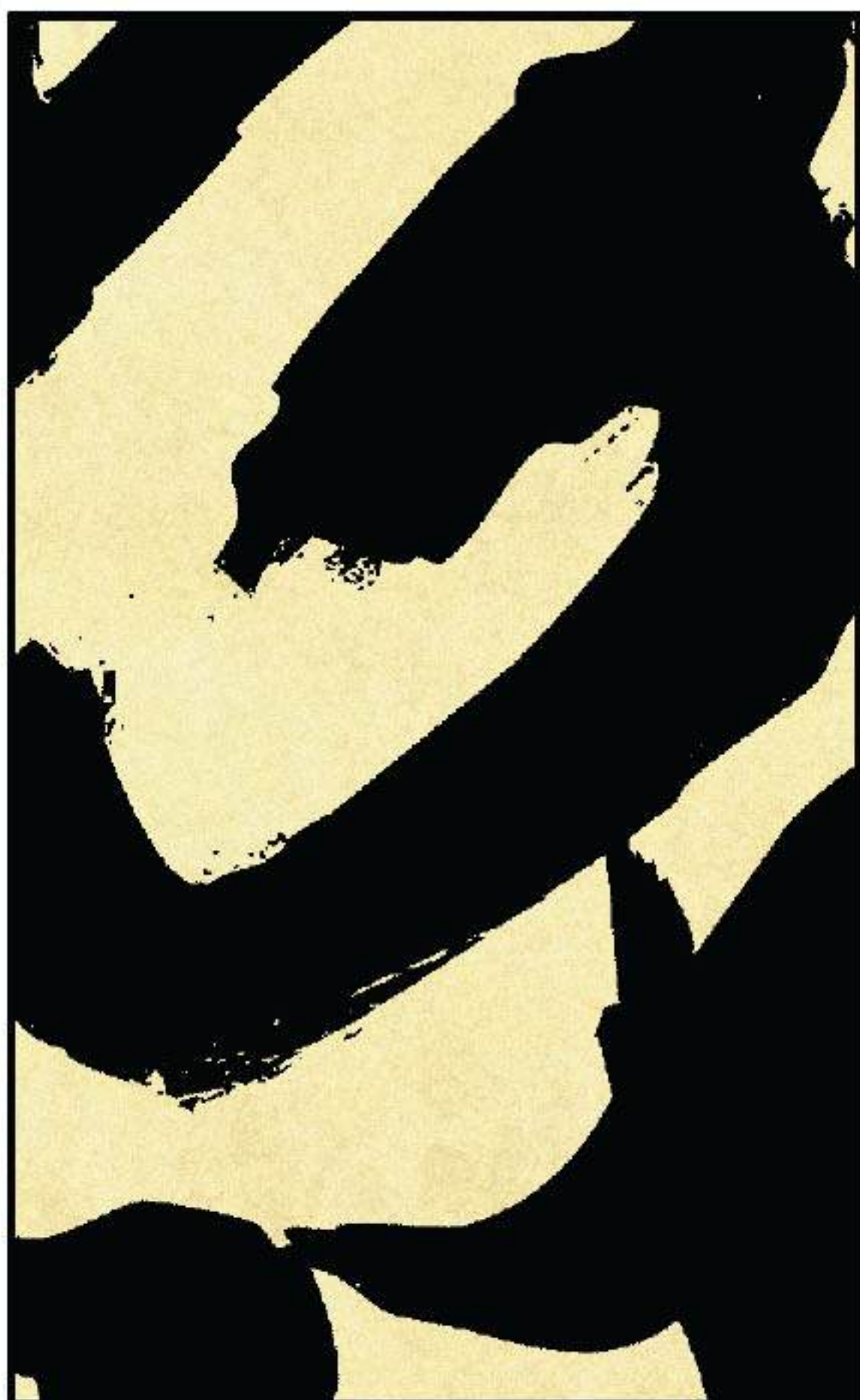
But now...



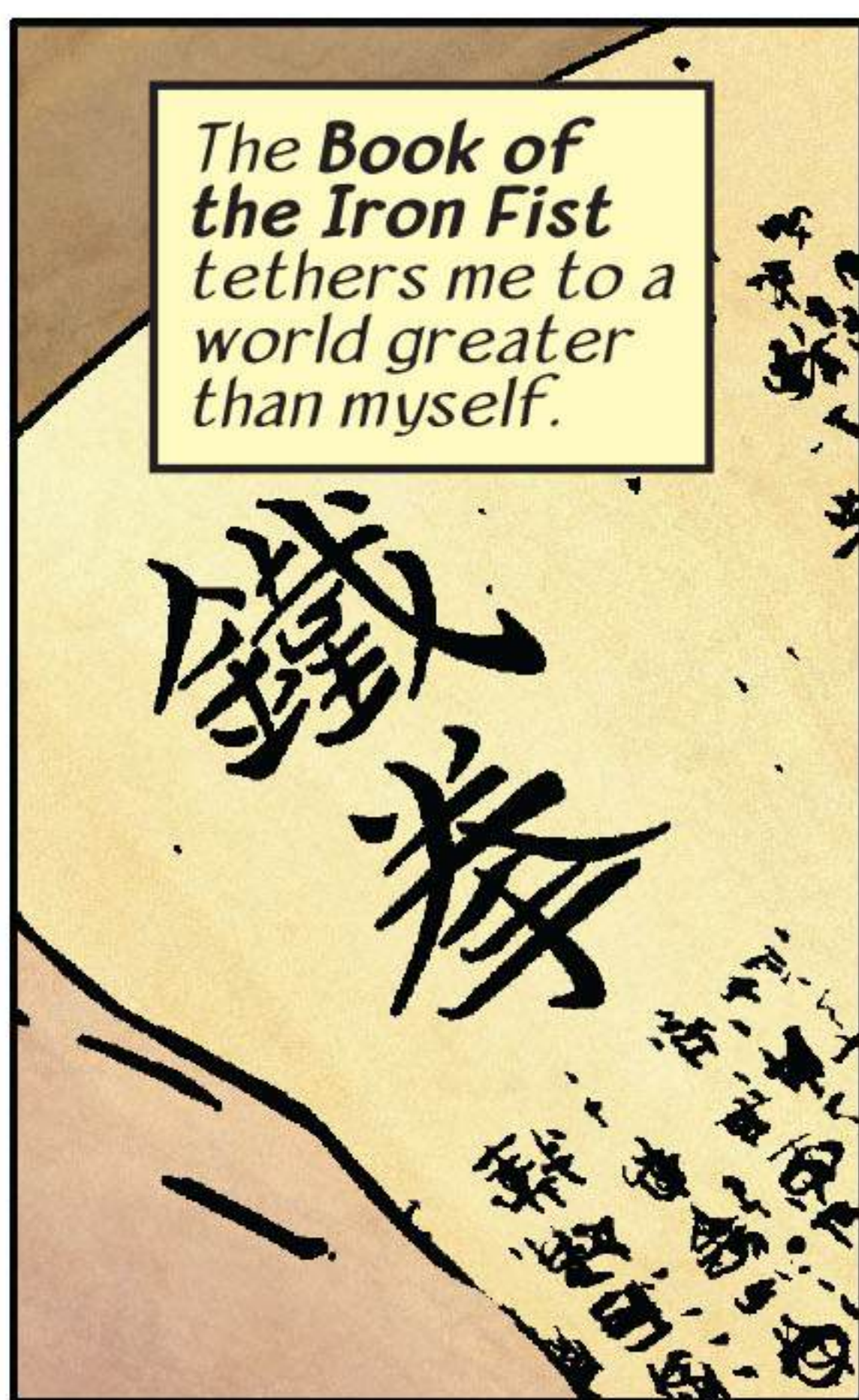
...I'm a link in a chain extending backwards through time **and** forwards simultaneously.



I have never been **more** of who and what I am than I am...



...right now.



The **Book of the Iron Fist** tethers me to a world greater than myself.



And in its pages, I am **home**. I am **safe**--



WHOA.

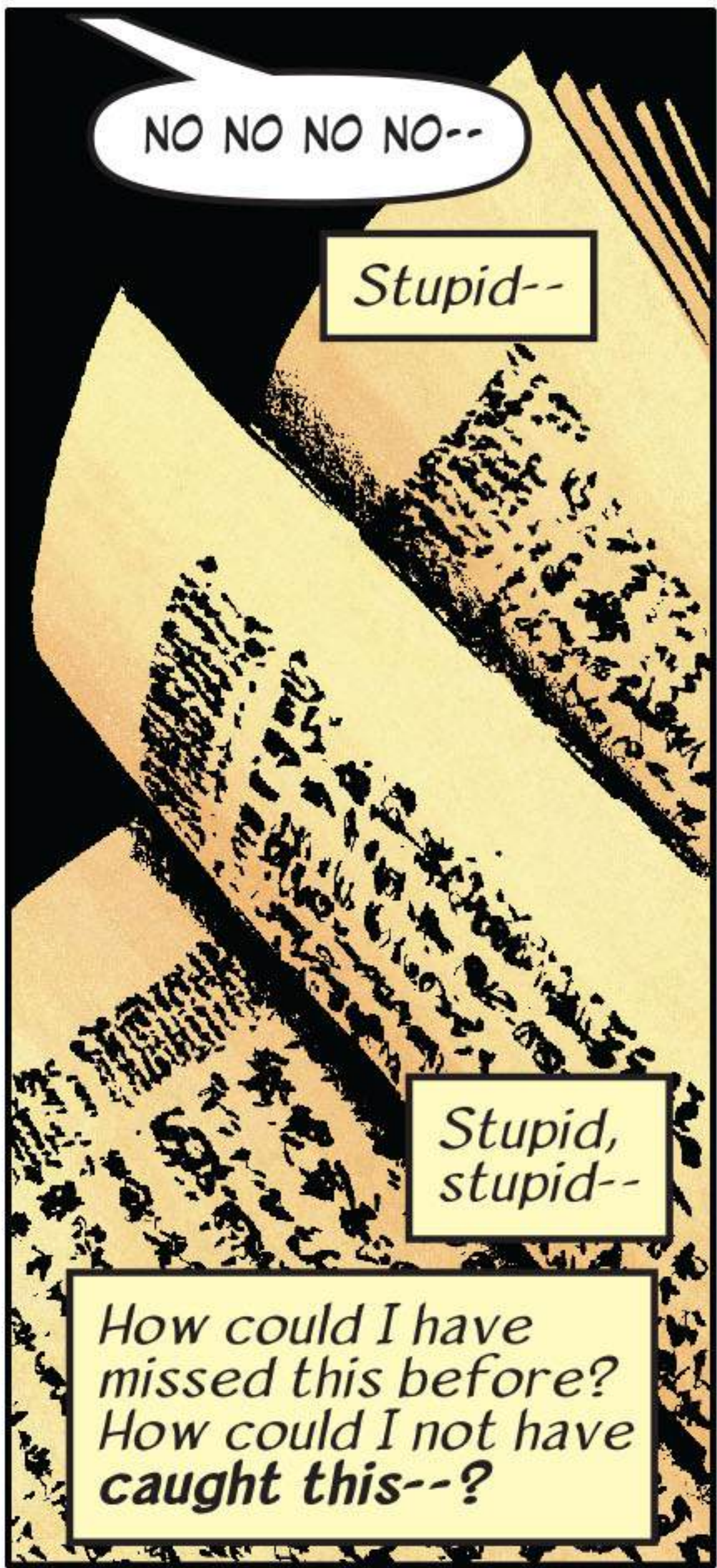


WAIT.

C'MON
C'MON
C'MON--



--DAMMIT. NO.

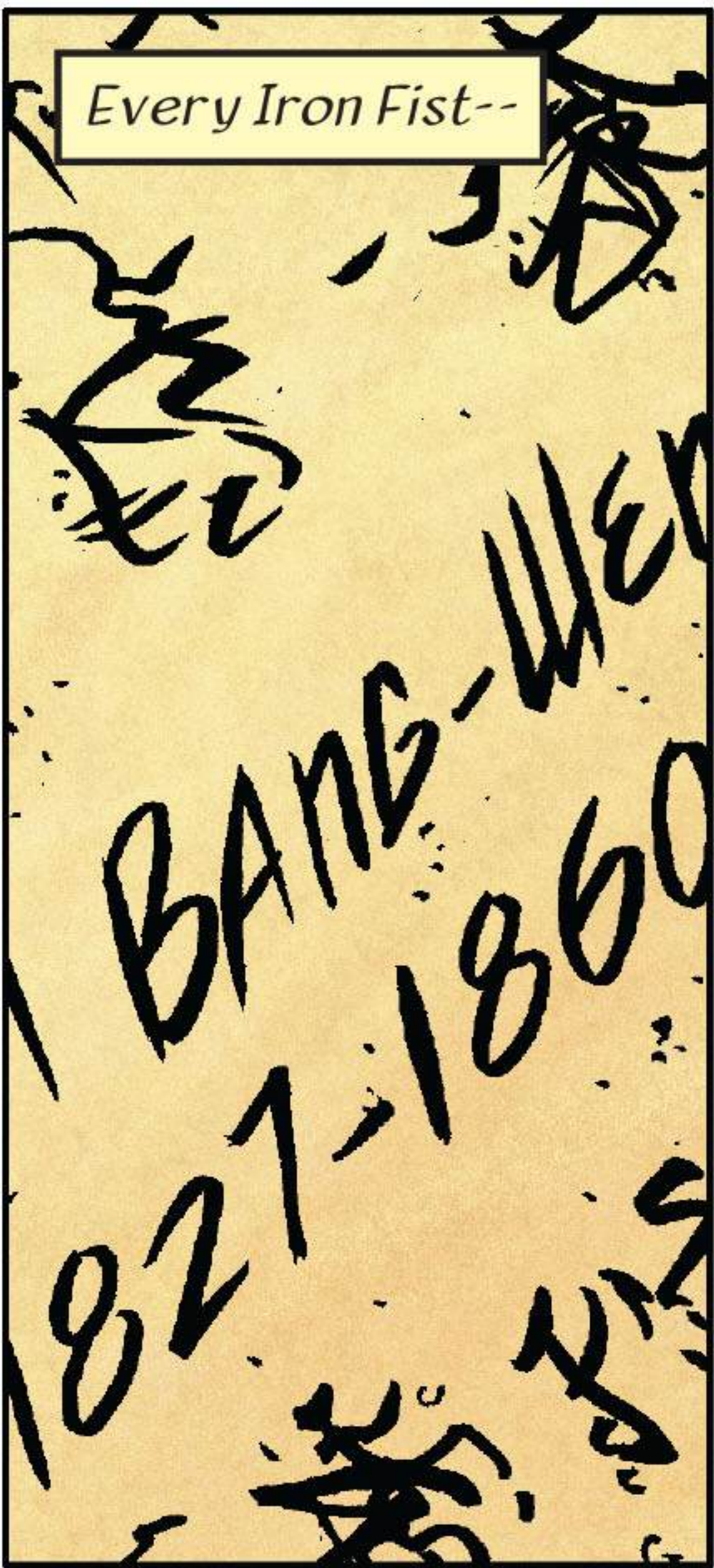


NO NO NO NO--

Stupid--

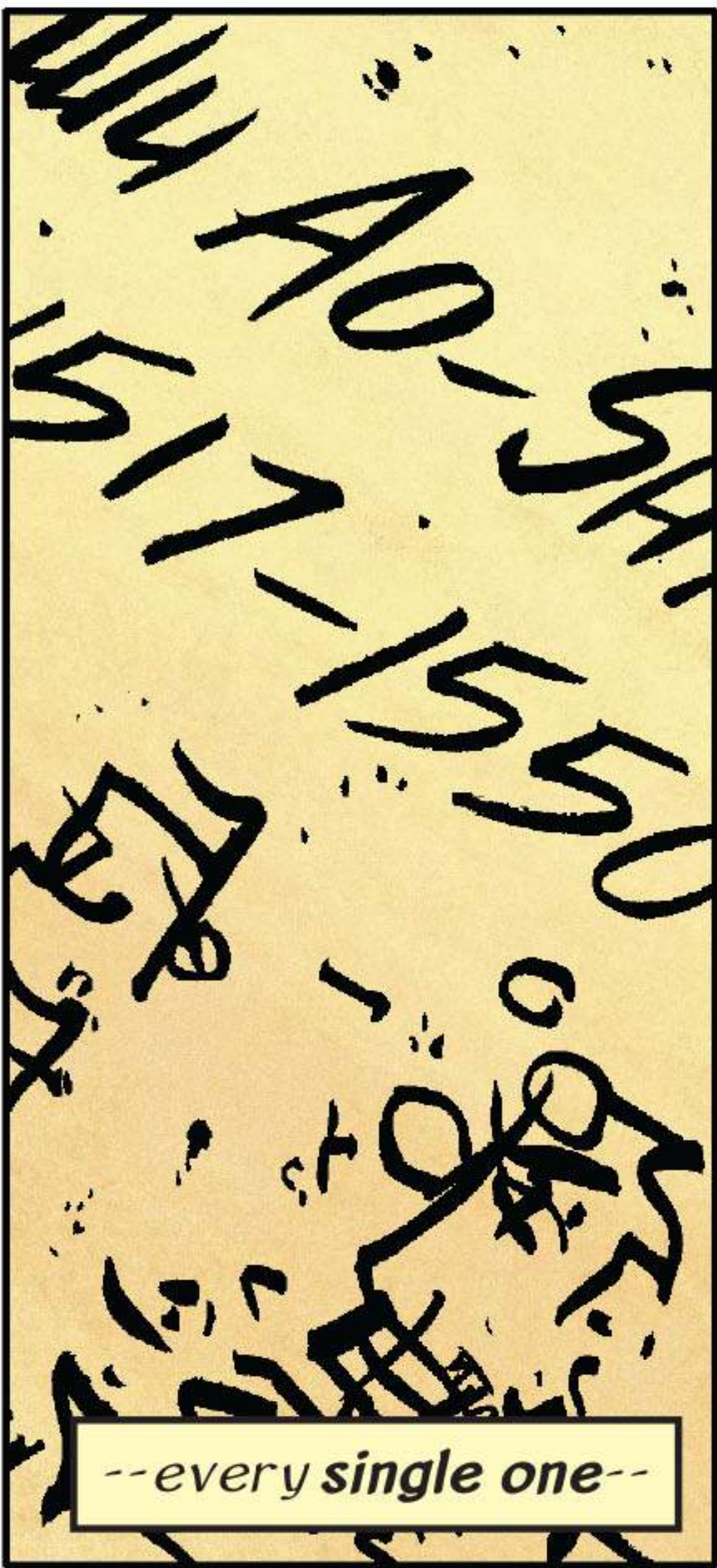
Stupid,
stupid--

How could I have
missed this before?
How could I not have
caught this--?

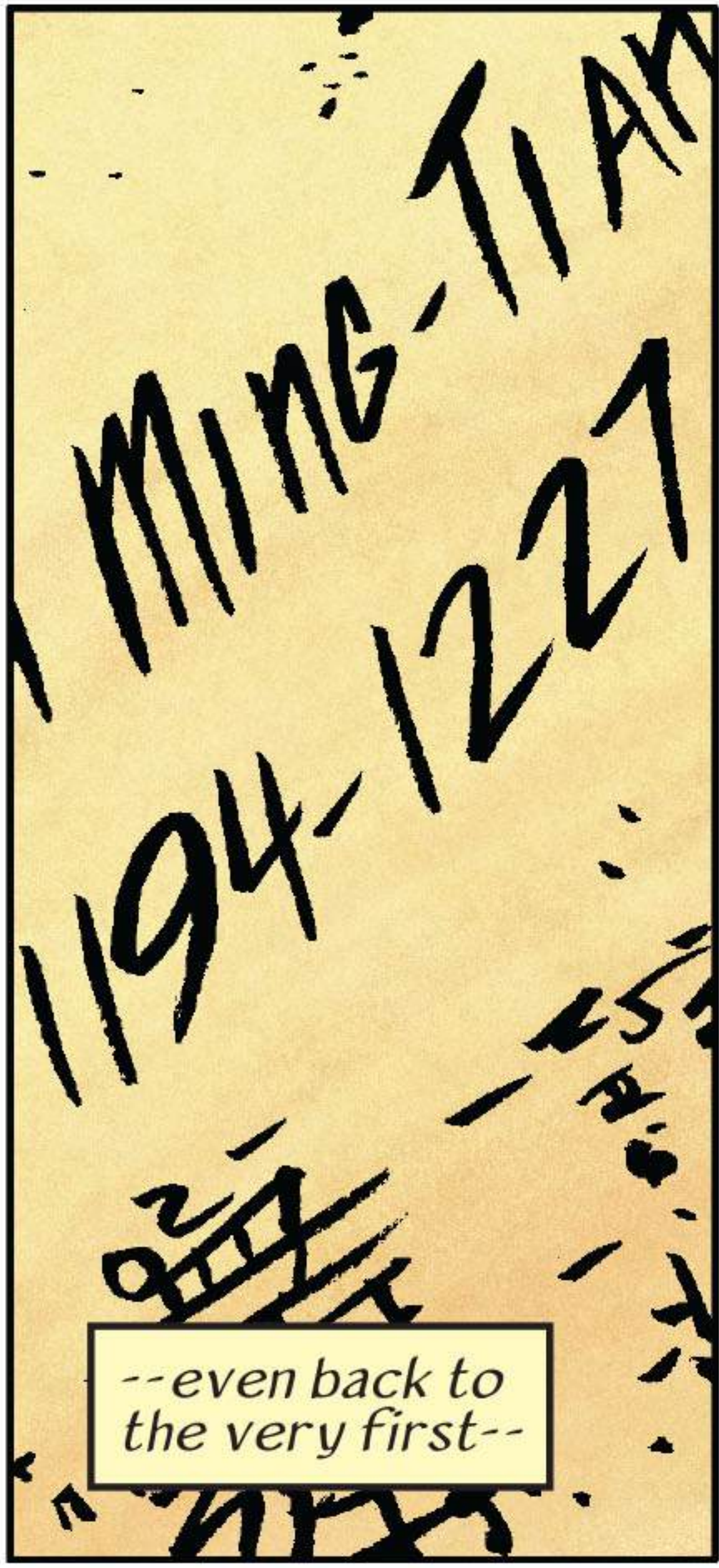


Every Iron Fist--

BANG-WEN
1827-1860



--every single one--



MING-TIAN
1194-1227

--even back to
the very first--



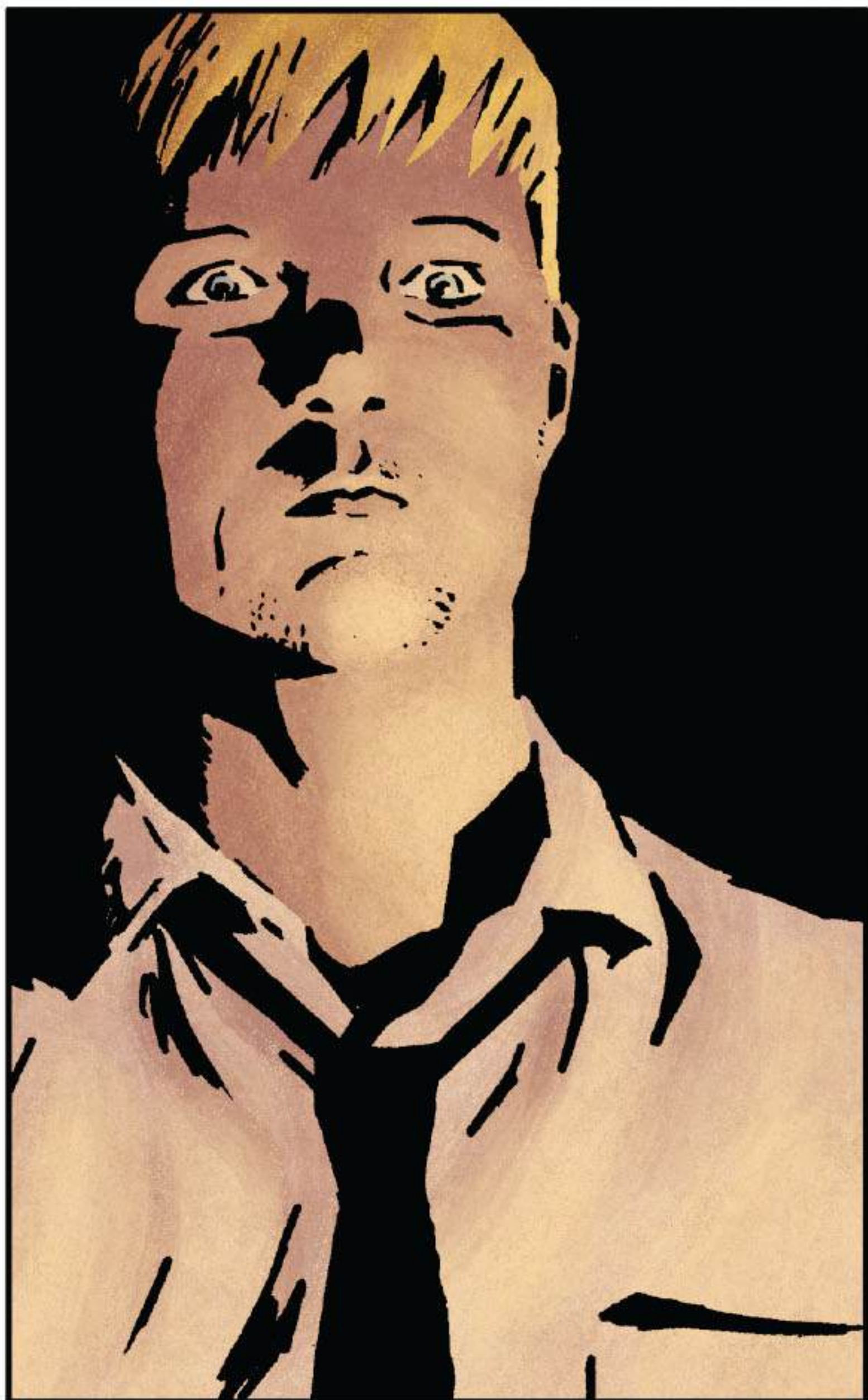
DANNY...?

They've all died
at thirty-three.

The same age Orson was
when he went missing.



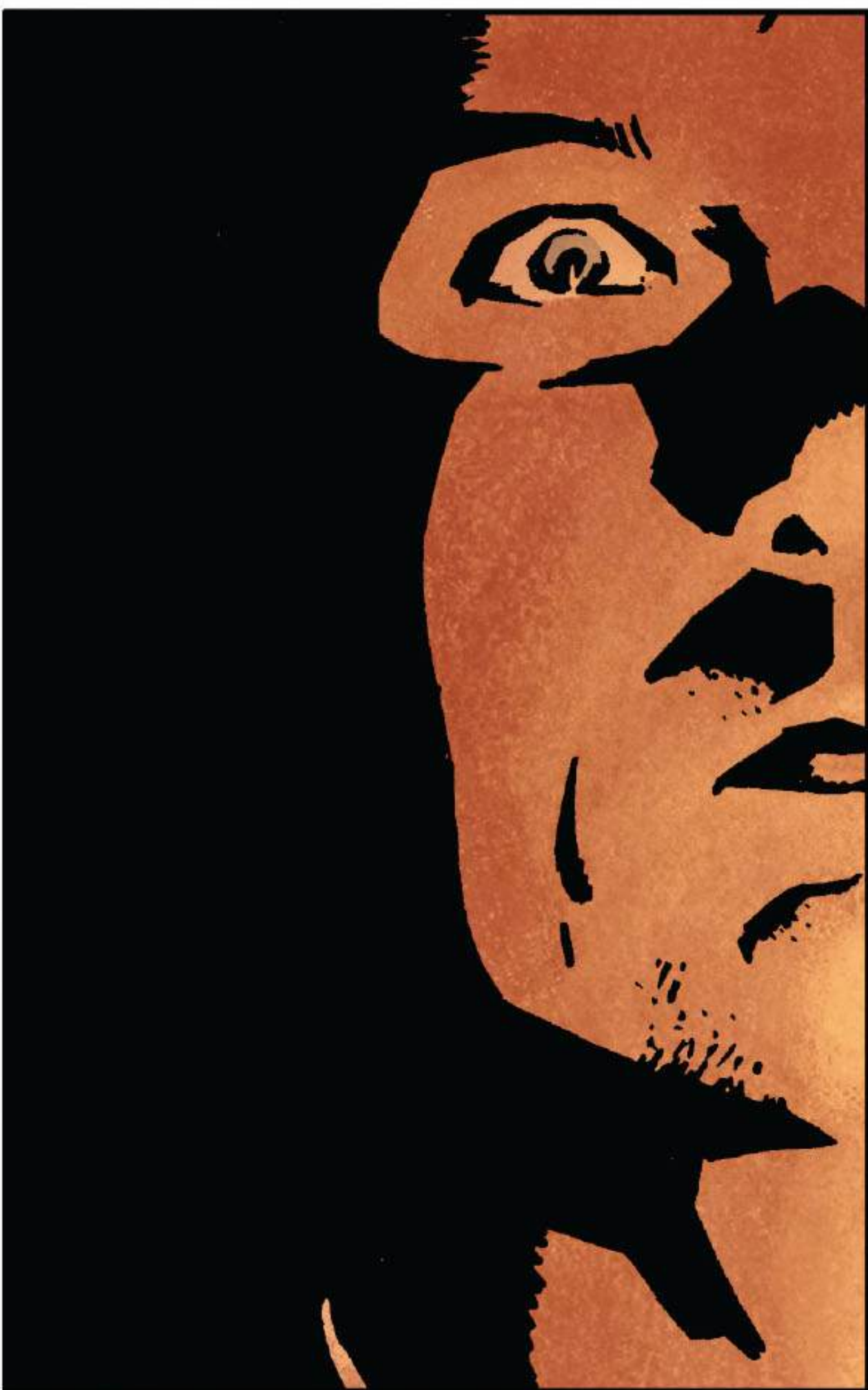
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DANNY!



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



MAKE A *WISH*, BABY. A BIG ONE. MAKE IT *COUNT*.





NEXT ISSUE



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MARVEL

ONE-SHOT

1

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST®

ORSON RANDALL AND THE GREEN MIST OF DEATH



FRACTION
DRAGOTTA
ALLRED
HEATH
LAROSA
GAUDIANO
HOLLINGSWORTH

Kaare
andrews
.com

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Orson Randall! Hero, adventurer, dashing rogue! Born and raised in the mystical city of K'un-Lun, Orson defeated the dragon Shou-Lao the undying and gained extraordinary powers. With superhuman strength, speed, and fighting prowess, he became the city's Immortal Weapon! But after traveling to Earth and enduring the horrors of World War I, Orson refused to take part in the deadly tournament held every 88 years between K'un-Lun and the six other mystical cities. Resisting his fellow Immortal Weapons' use of force, Orson accidentally killed the Crane Champion of K'un-Zi, and fled.

For the next several decades – long before Danny Rand would travel to K'un-Lun and become successor to the title of the Immortal Iron Fist – Orson roamed the Earth, a bounty on his head. In the company of his makeshift family, the Confederates of the Curious – including Danny's father, Wendell Rand – Orson has evaded the pursuits of the Immortal Weapons and quested around the globe for justice and adventure as...

THE GOLDEN AGE IRON FIST!



Previously:

Danny Rand – the Iron Fist and present-day Immortal Weapon of K'un-Lun – fights a war on many fronts. As the Tournament of Heavenly Cities unfolds, Danny must secure victory for K'un-Lun in order to return to Earth...and he's already lost his first match. But while the round robin elimination moves on, Danny's trainer and master, Lei Kung the Thunderer, has enlisted his aid in revolution. Lei Kung is raising an army by training the women of K'un-Lun in the martial arts, and means to bring down the city's corrupt lord. They face overwhelming odds, and defeat is all but assured.

During the tournament, Danny attempted to befriend the Prince of Orphans – the oldest, most powerful and most venerated of the seven Immortal Weapons – and the least known and most mysterious. But Danny was rebuffed by the enigmatic warrior.

At first, anyway. As Lei Kung and Danny steeled themselves to launch their rebellion at dawn and rewrite the destiny of the Heavenly Cities, Danny was paid a private visit in his quarters. It was the Prince of Orphans – a.k.a. John Aman. He came to Danny bearing the mark of the Thunderer tattooed on his chest, announcing his allegiance to their cause...and asked how Danny knew to trust him. Danny revealed that he'd learned of Aman by reading of the life and adventures of the Iron Fist Orson Randall, where Aman made several appearances...

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST: ORSON RANDALL AND THE GREEN MIST OF DEATH

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FROM THE MAGICAL MEMOIRS
OF SHADU THE SHADY:
The 53rd Card is an occult
speakeasy where I have
performed my fabulous feats
countless times...



I know every inch of the
theatre, every stitch in the
stage curtain, and yet
tonight, something dreadfully
ominous happened during my
second showing of the night:

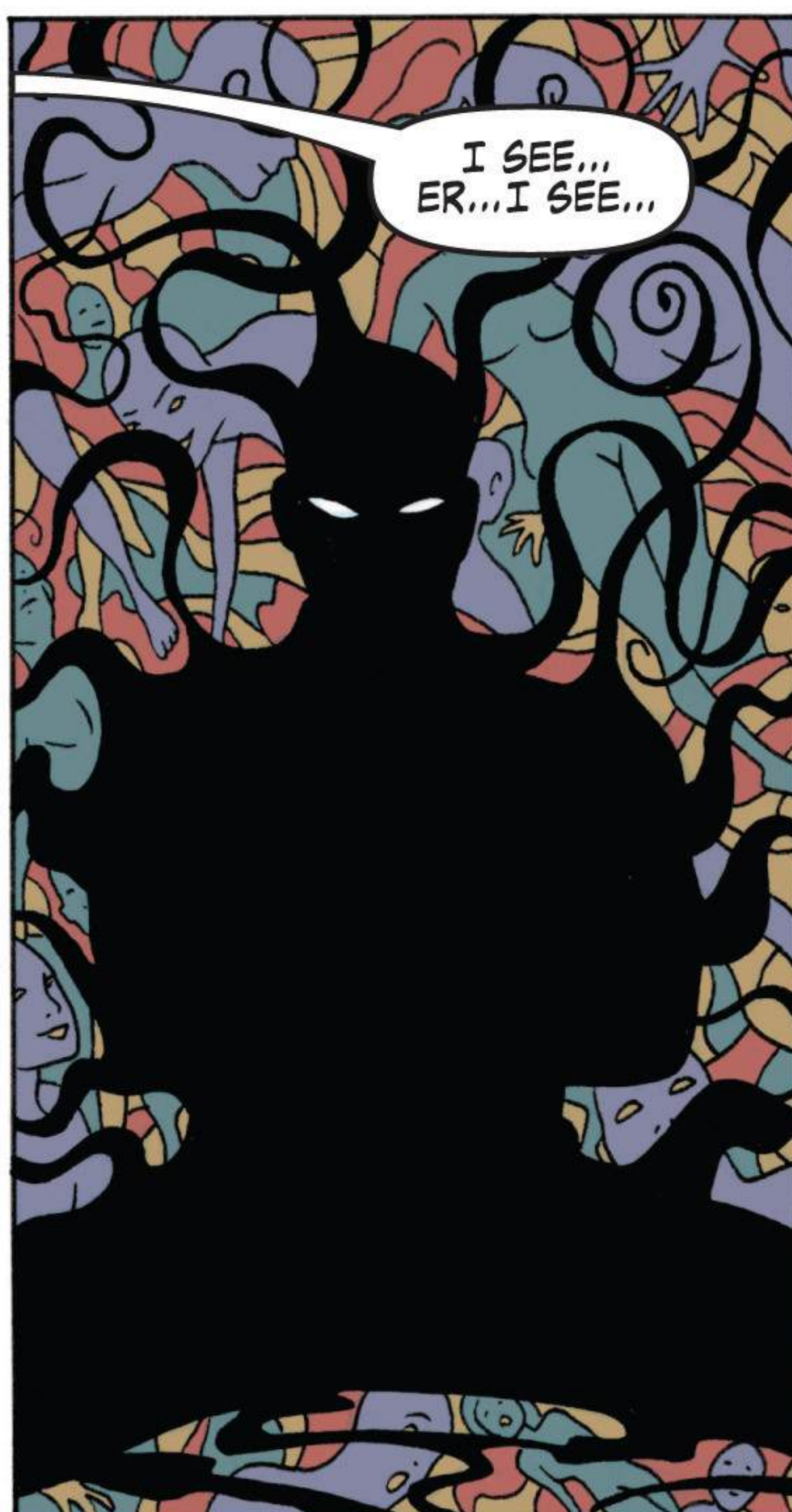


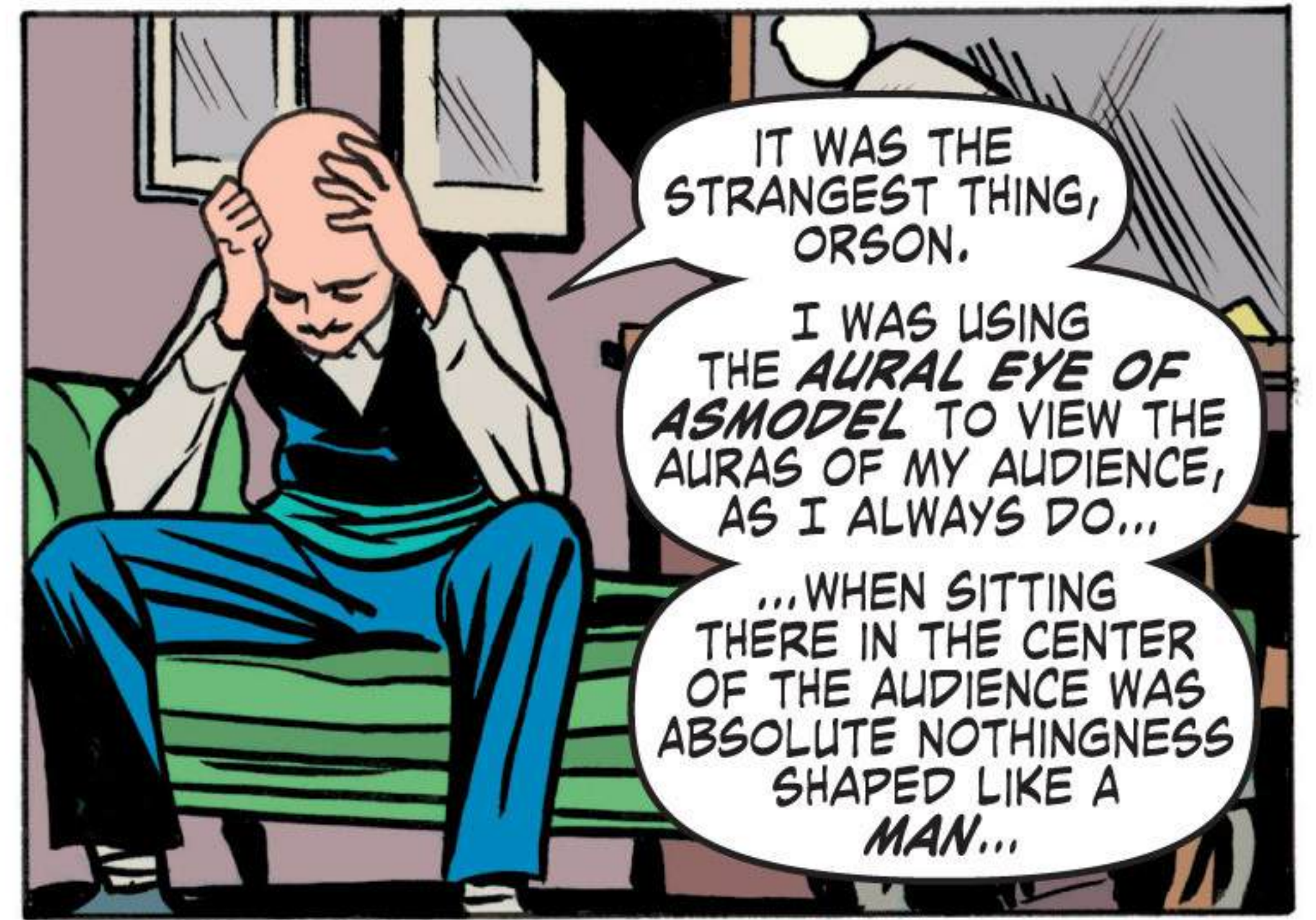
PUT YOUR TRUST IN ME, DEAR
AUDIENCE... OPEN UP YOUR OWN...
PSYCHIC BARRIERS... TO MY
INQUESTS...

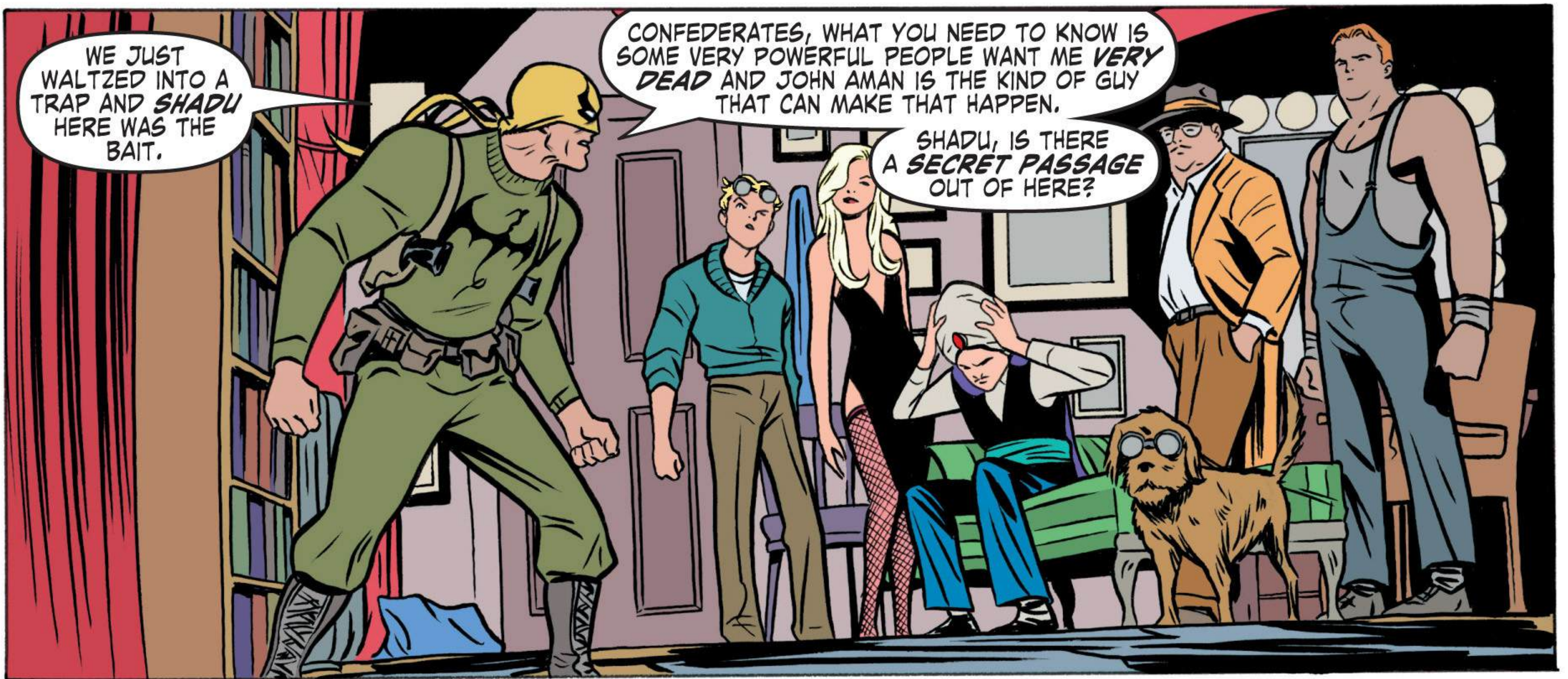


I'M
CASTING... MY
THIRD EYE... ONTO
YOU ALL...















TOLD YOU A MILLION TIMES--"ISN'T," NOT "AIN'T."

I DON'T CARE, YA BIG COWARD. IF YOU THINK I'M GONNA--

HEY.

IF YOU THINK--



WENDELL. LISTEN TO ME.

WE'RE NOT READY FOR A FIGHT THIS SIZE. WE'RE NOT READY FOR A FOE THIS GREAT.

AND AS LONG AS YOU AND THE REST OF THE CONFEDERATES RUN WITH ME, I HAVE TO PUT YOUR SAFETY FIRST.



AW, THAT'S GARBAGE AND YOU KNOW IT, ORSON.

YOU TAUGHT ME TO NEVER RUN AWAY FROM A FIGHT, NEVER EVER. SO I *DON'T*--AND NOW YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT'S WHAT WE NEED TO DO?

I AIN'T-- I'M *NOT*--AFRAID, ORSON.



I KNOW, SON. I KNOW.

BUT YOU *SHOULD* BE.



BESIDES, THE COINS ARE JUST-- THEY'RE BAUBLES, WEND, THEY DON'T MEAN ANYTHING.

EASY FOR YOU TO SAY! THEY'RE FROM *MAGICAL CITIES* THAT AIN'T EVEN *ON EARTH*! THEY MIGHT BE JUNK TO YOU, BUT TO ME THEY'RE--

BARK BARK



BOSS. LOOK!

DAMMIT.



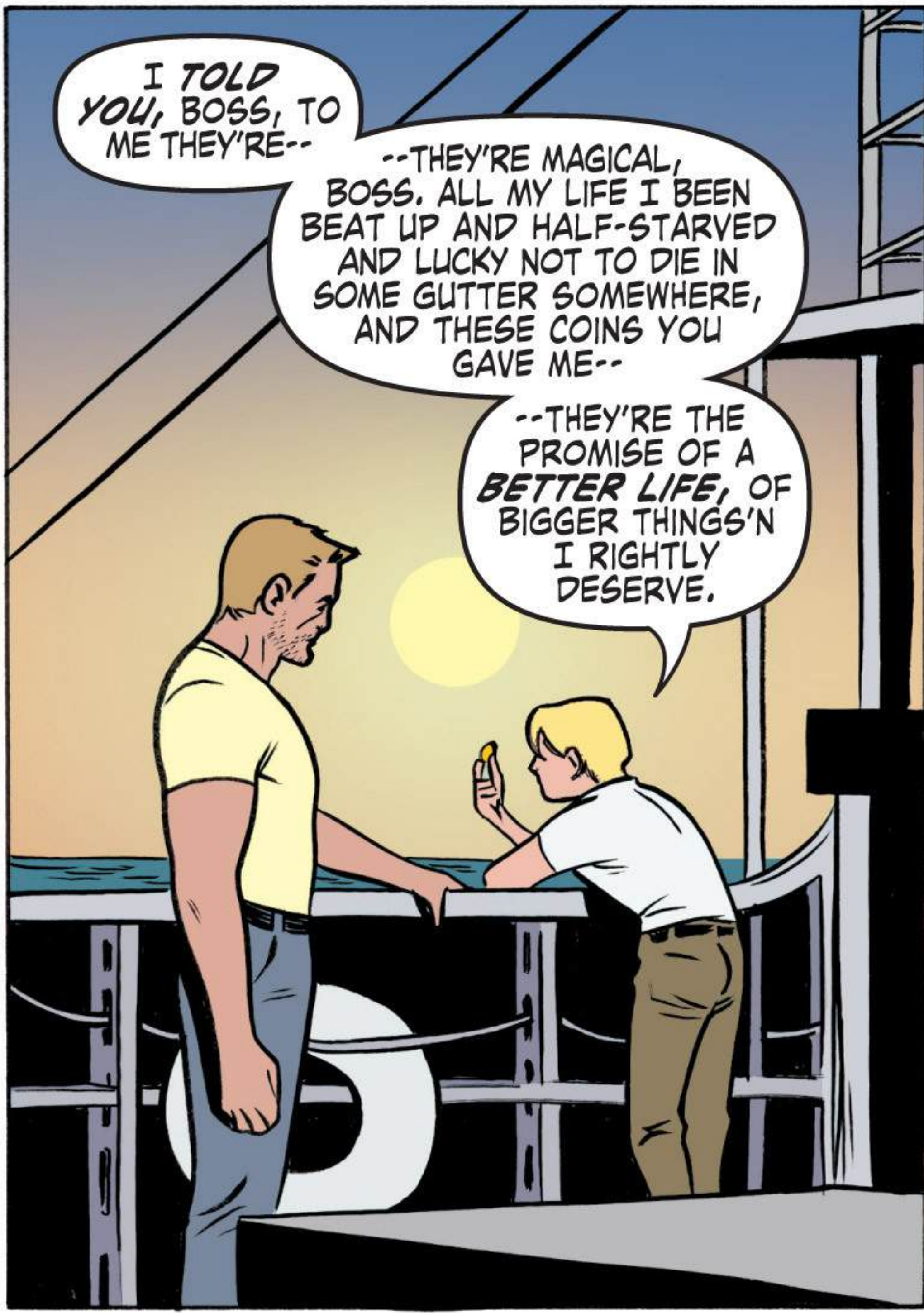


HNN.



"NICE WORK BACK THERE, KID."

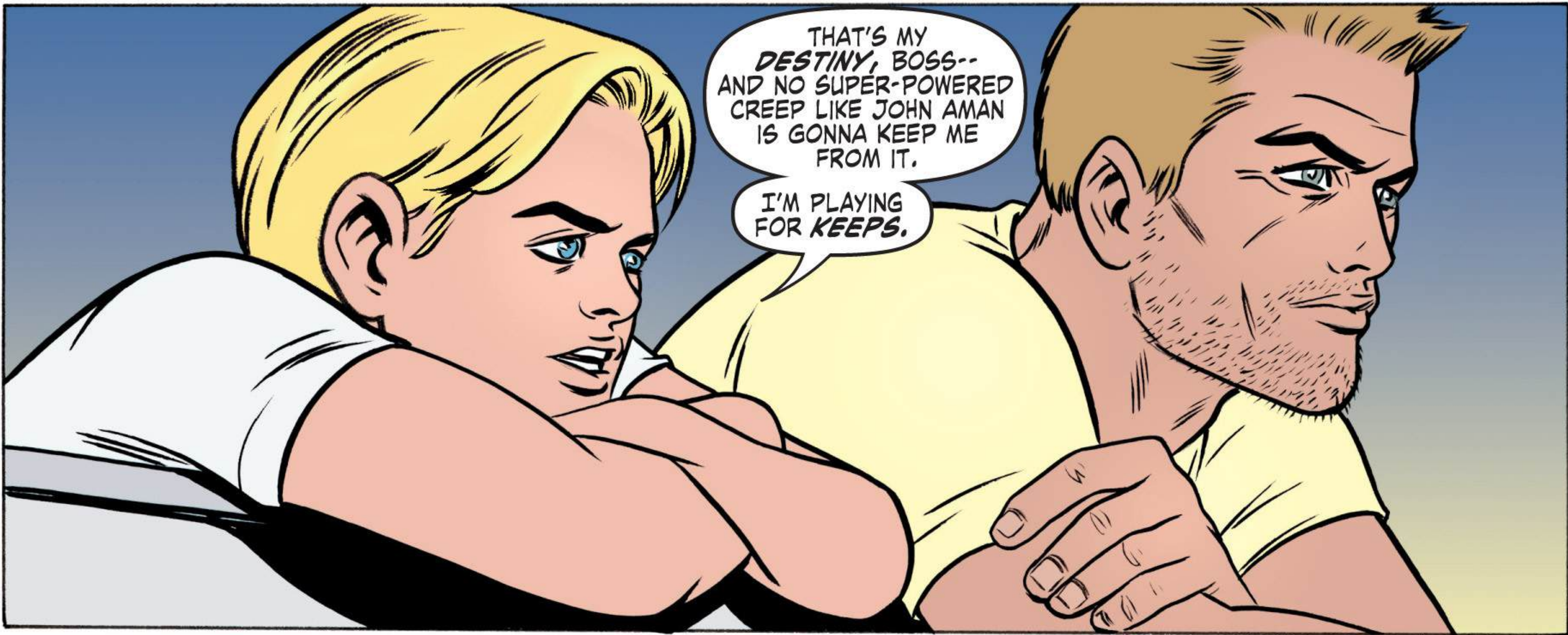
"YOU ALMOST GOT YOURSELF KILLED FOR A HANDFUL OF COINS."



I TOLD YOU, BOSS, TO ME THEY'RE--

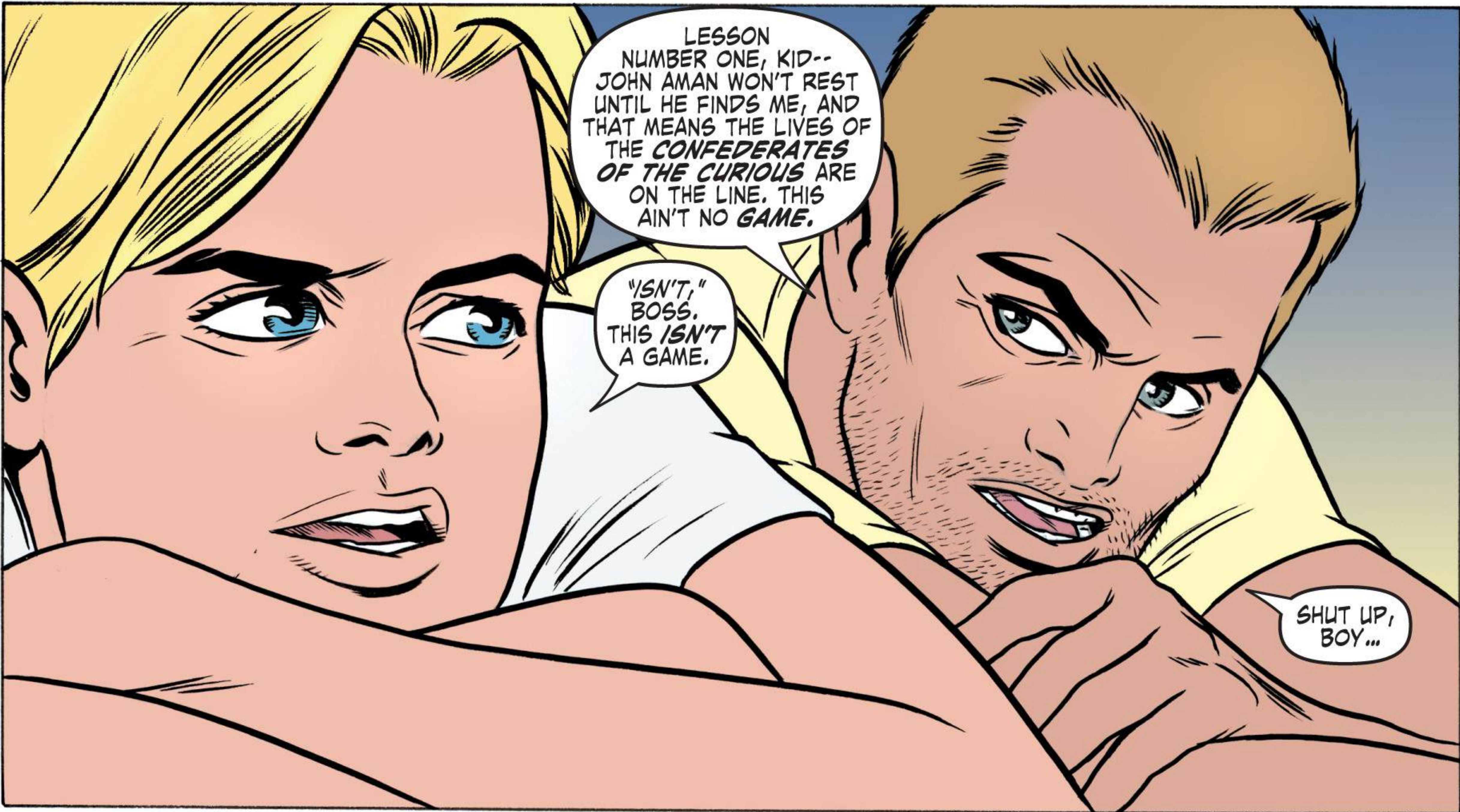
--THEY'RE MAGICAL, BOSS. ALL MY LIFE I BEEN BEAT UP AND HALF-STARVED AND LUCKY NOT TO DIE IN SOME GUTTER SOMEWHERE, AND THESE COINS YOU GAVE ME--

--THEY'RE THE PROMISE OF A BETTER LIFE, OF BIGGER THINGS'N I RIGHTLY DESERVE.



THAT'S MY DESTINY, BOSS-- AND NO SUPER-POWERED CREEP LIKE JOHN AMAN IS GONNA KEEP ME FROM IT.

I'M PLAYING FOR KEEPS.



LESSON NUMBER ONE, KID-- JOHN AMAN WON'T REST UNTIL HE FINDS ME, AND THAT MEANS THE LIVES OF THE CONFEDERATES OF THE CURIOUS ARE ON THE LINE. THIS AIN'T NO GAME.

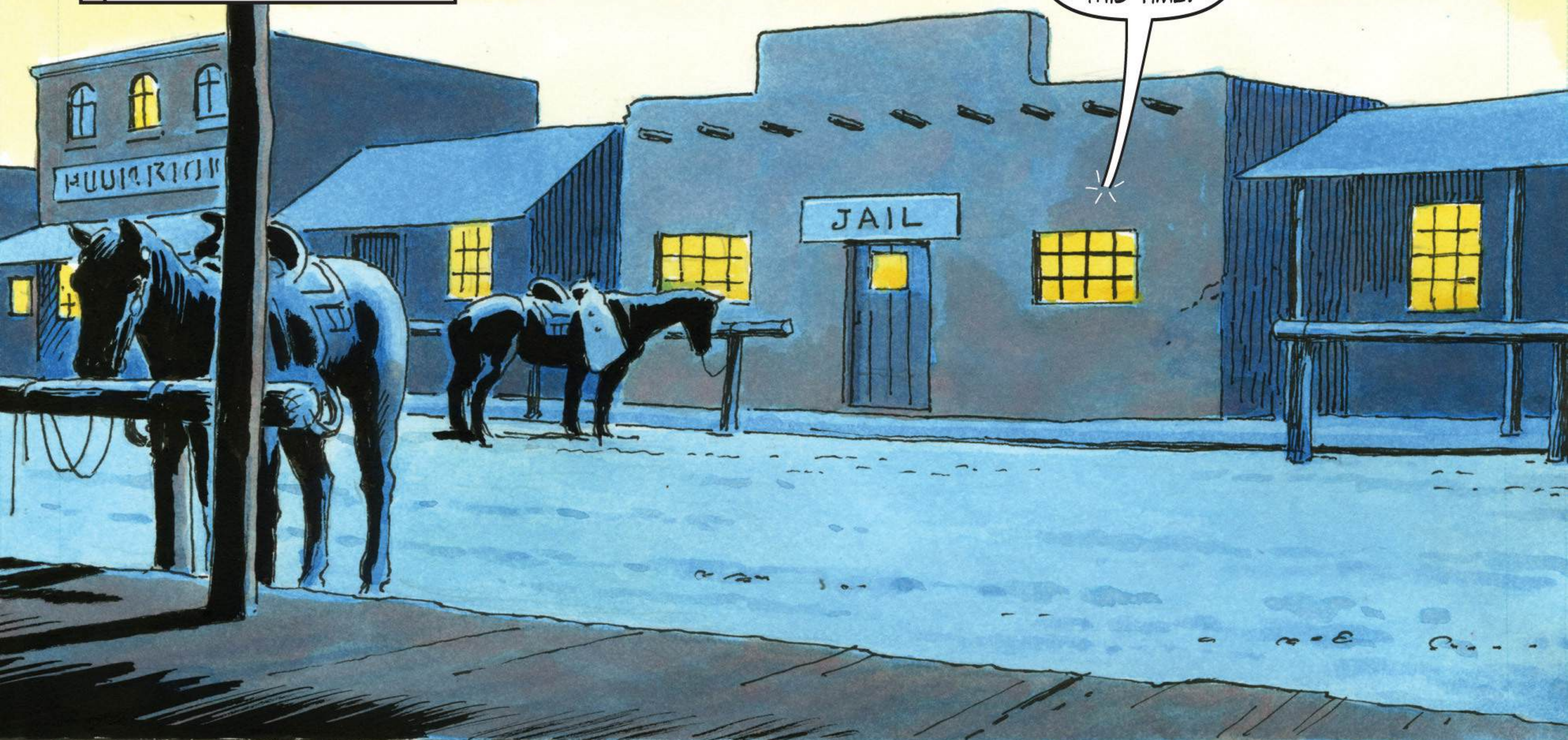
"ISN'T," BOSS. THIS ISN'T A GAME.

SHUT UP, BOY...

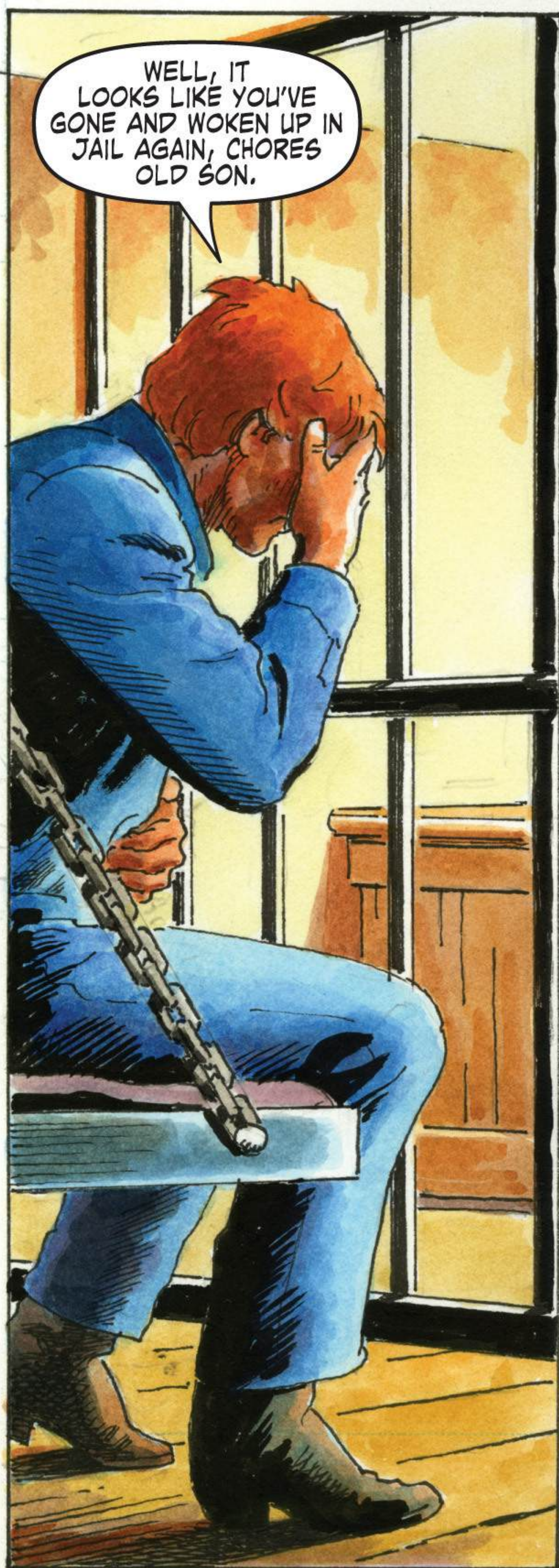
"...WE SHOULD **CRASH** SOON. THERE'S PLENTY OF TROUBLE WAITING FOR US TO FIND IT OUT THERE, AND I WANT TO BE **WELL RESTED** FOR WHEN WE DO..."

OOOOHH, ME ACHIN' HEAD.

CHORES MacGILLICUDDY, YOU'VE REALLY TIED ONE ON THIS TIME.



WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GONE AND WOKEN UP IN JAIL AGAIN, CHORES OLD SON.



NOT THE FIRST TIME; WON'T BE THE LAST.



SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE DEGENERATE.

NOW EAT UP, PIG!





WE'D EXPECT NOTHING LESS FROM ONE OF THE "CONFEDERATES OF THE CURIOUS."

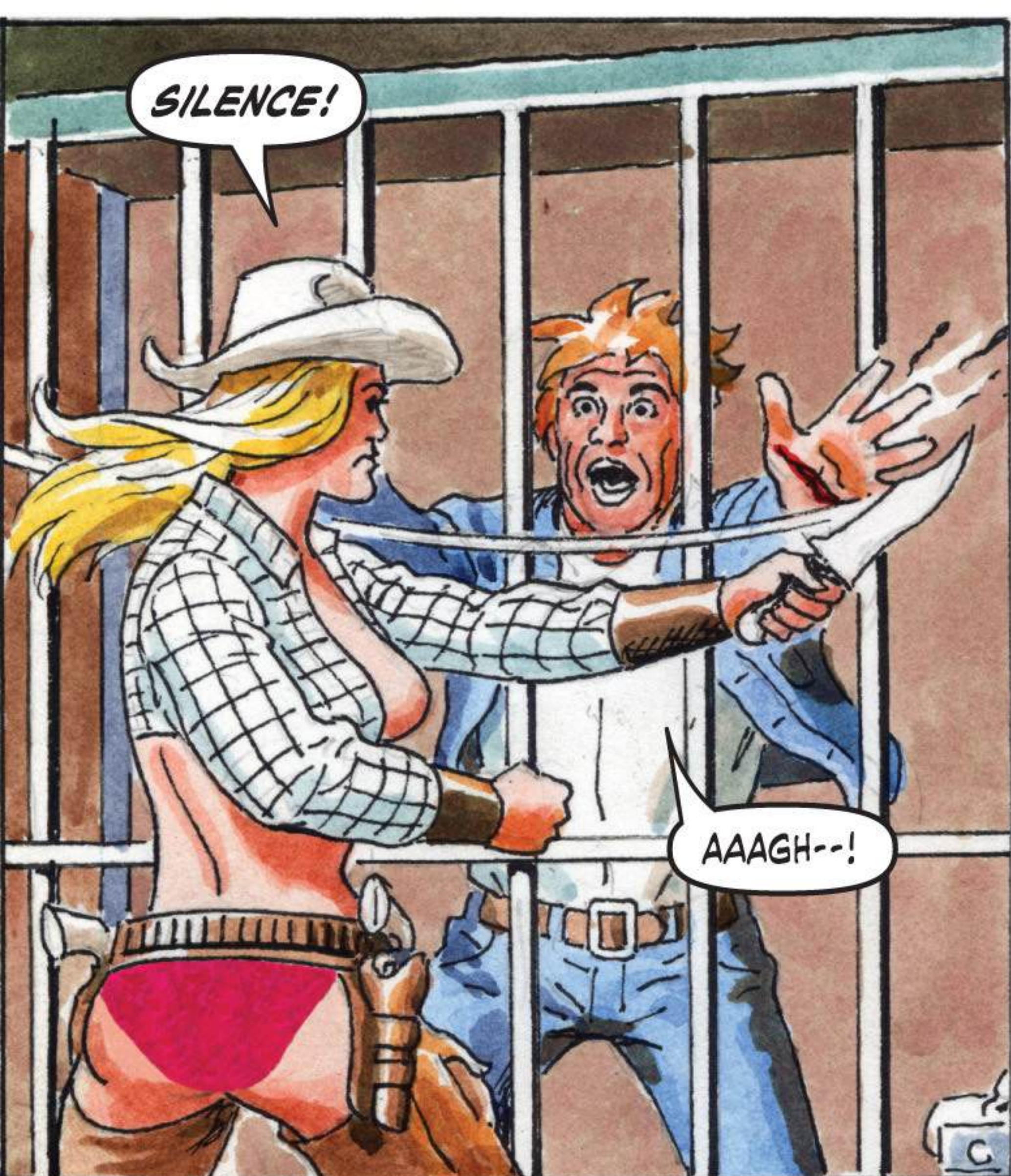
PIGS.

OPPRESSORS!



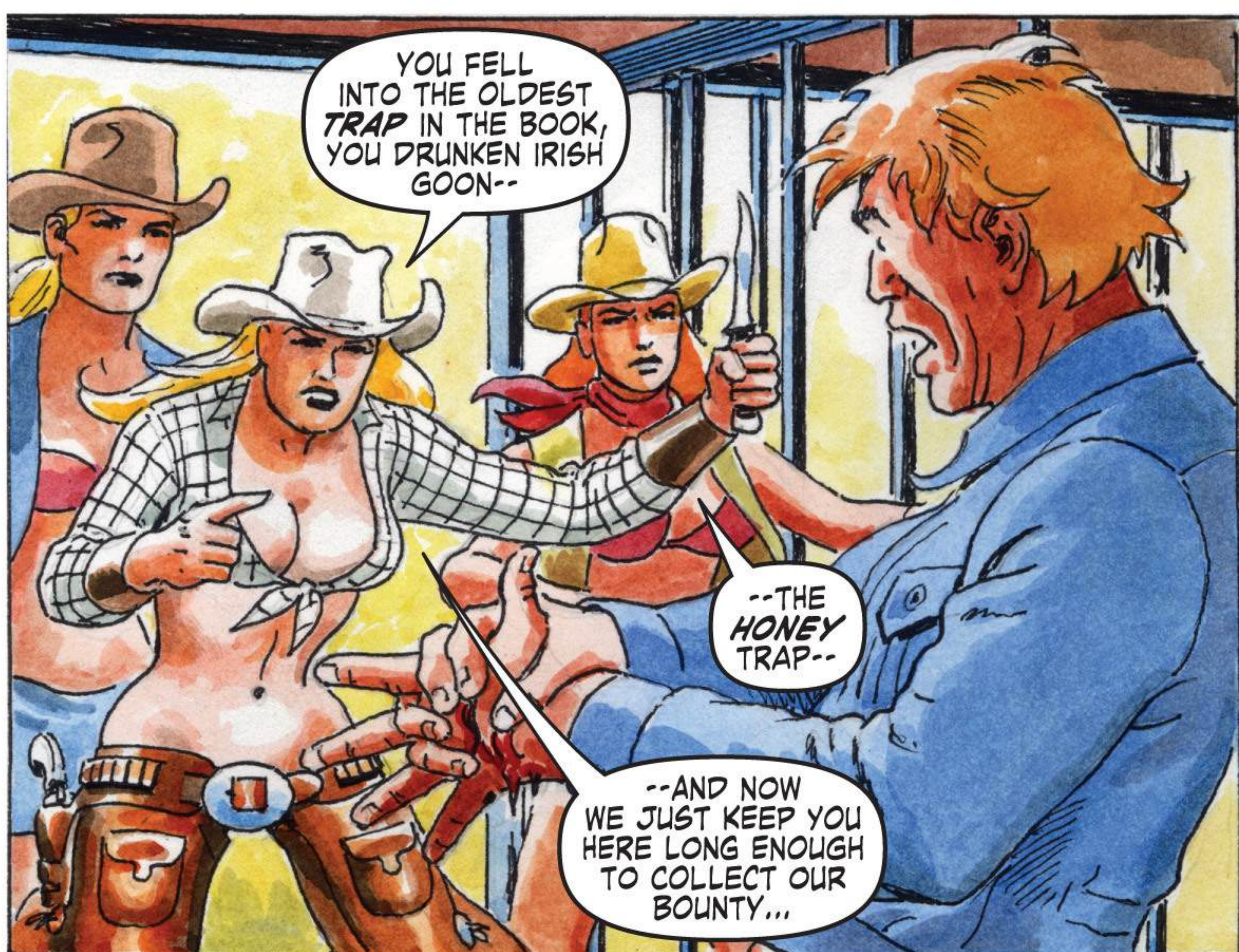
YOU--

--YOU'RE THEM LASSES FROM THE SALOON LAST NIGHT--



SILENCE!

AAAGH--!



YOU FELL INTO THE OLDEST TRAP IN THE BOOK, YOU DRUNKEN IRISH GOON--

--THE HONEY TRAP--

--AND NOW WE JUST KEEP YOU HERE LONG ENOUGH TO COLLECT OUR BOUNTY...



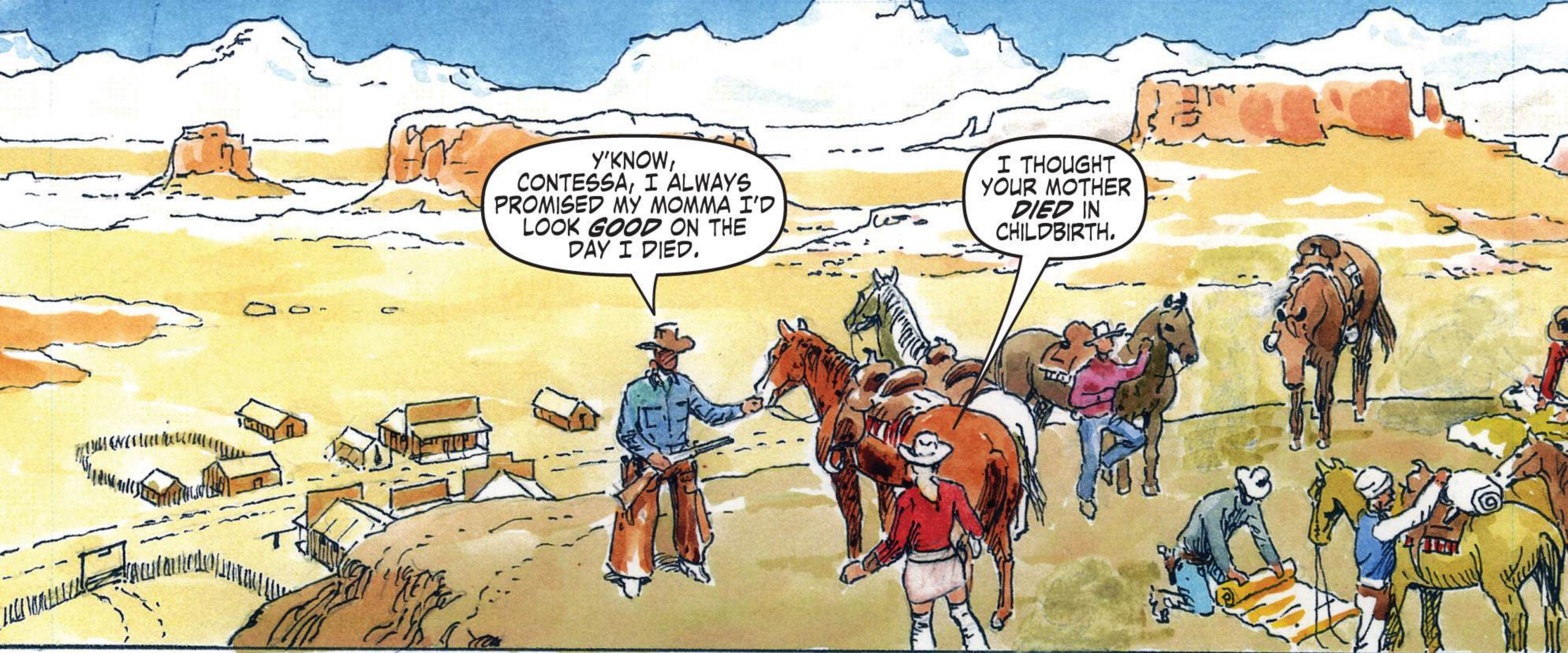
...FROM JOHN AMAN, THE PRINCE OF ORPHANS.

HE'S COMING FOR YOU, CHORES MacGILLICUDDY. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY...



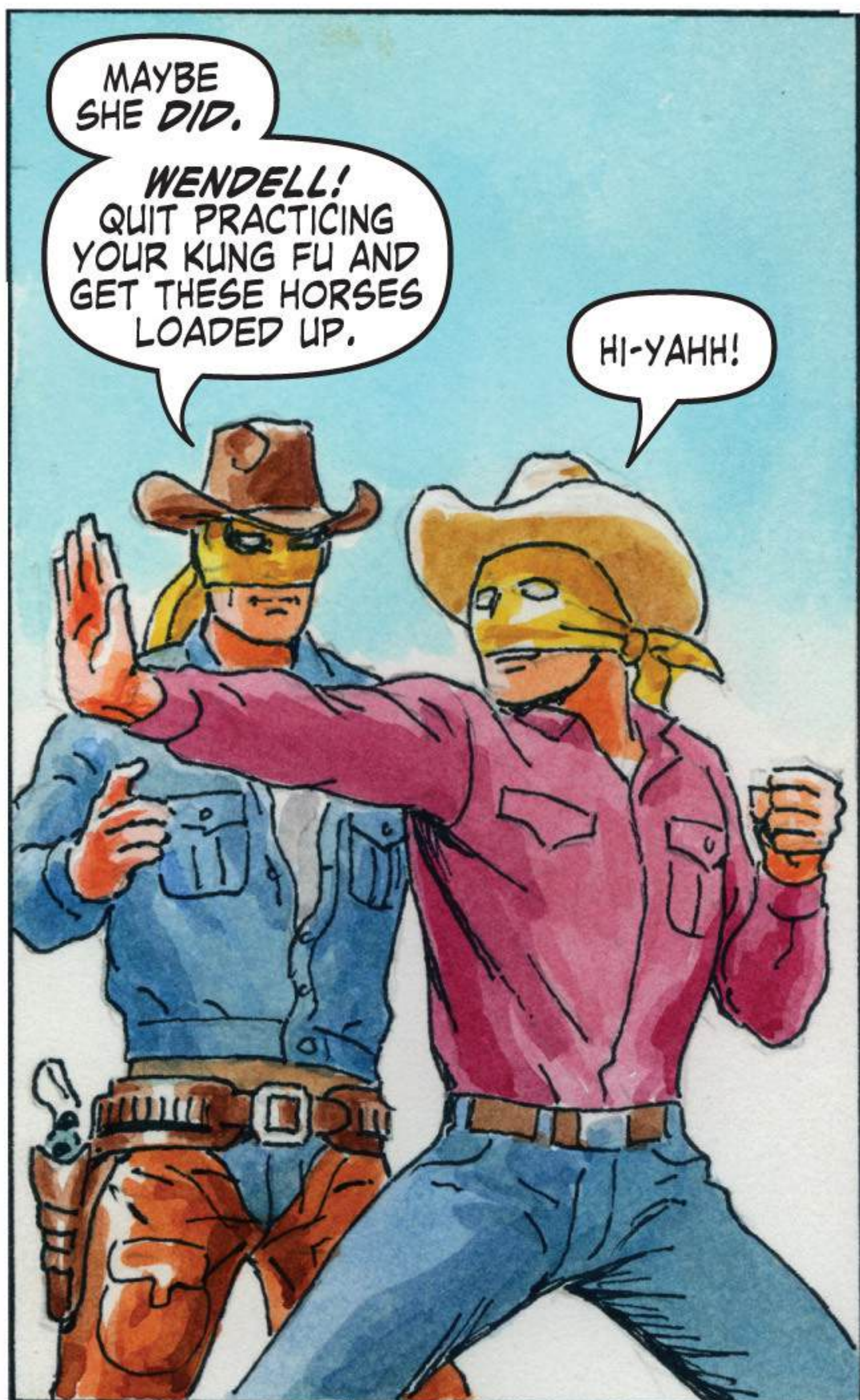
ORSON RANDALL!

ARE YOU... ACTUALLY GROOMING?



Y'KNOW, CONTESSA, I ALWAYS PROMISED MY MOMMA I'D LOOK **GOOD** ON THE DAY I DIED.

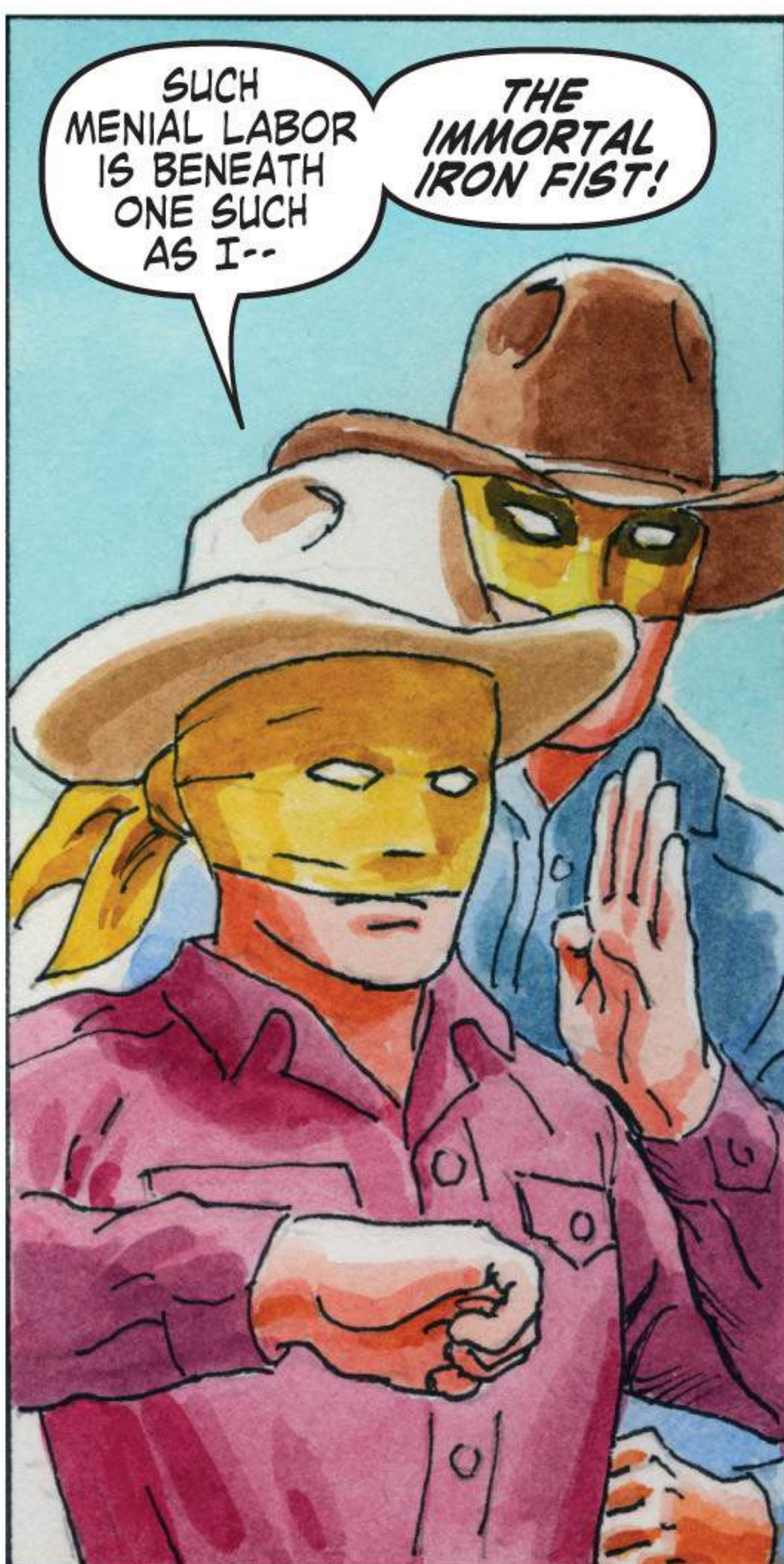
I THOUGHT YOUR MOTHER **DIED** IN CHILDBIRTH.



MAYBE SHE **DID**.

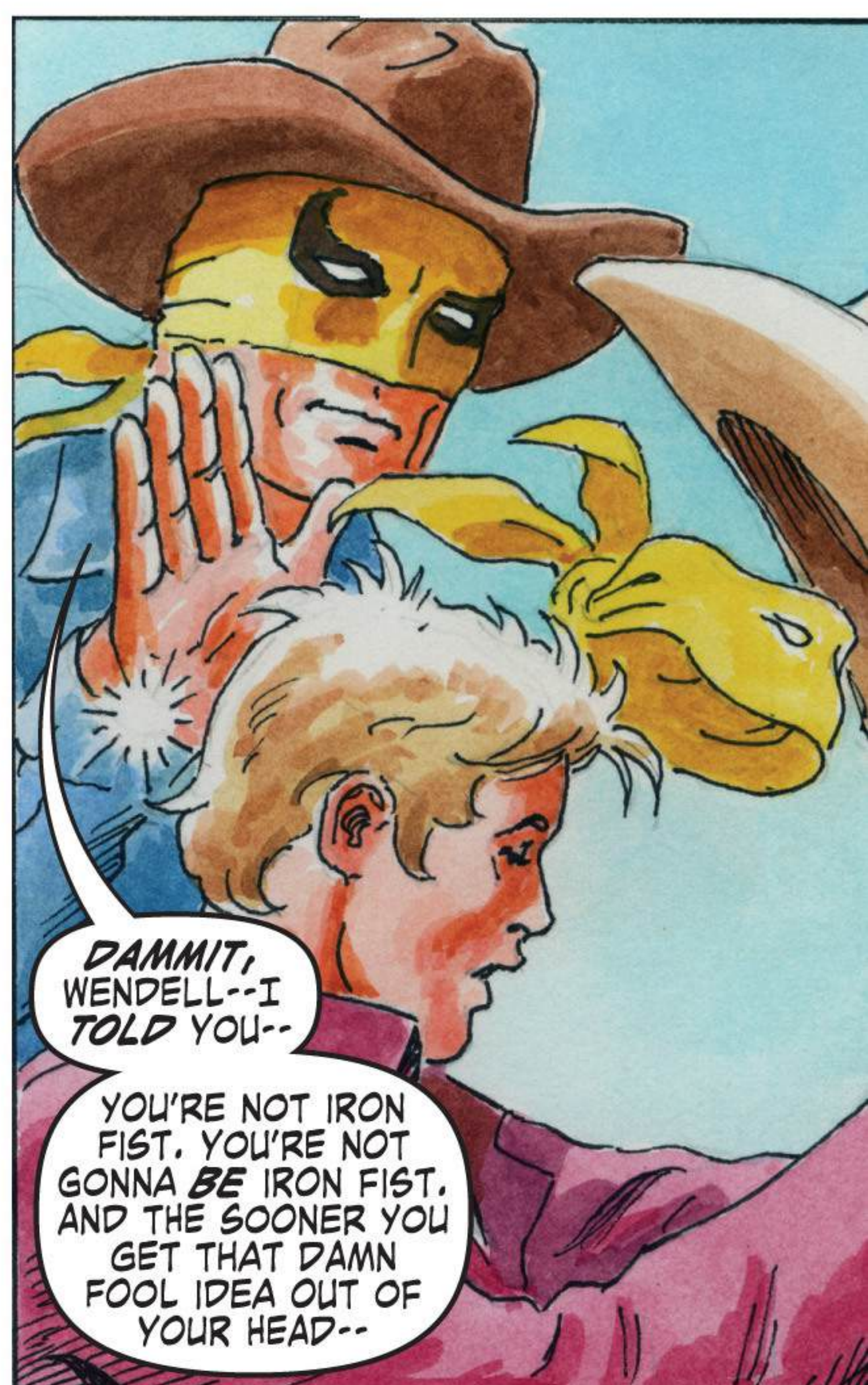
WENDELL! QUIT PRACTICING YOUR KUNG FU AND GET THESE HORSES LOADED UP.

HI-YAHH!



SUCH MENIAL LABOR IS BENEATH ONE SUCH AS I--

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST!



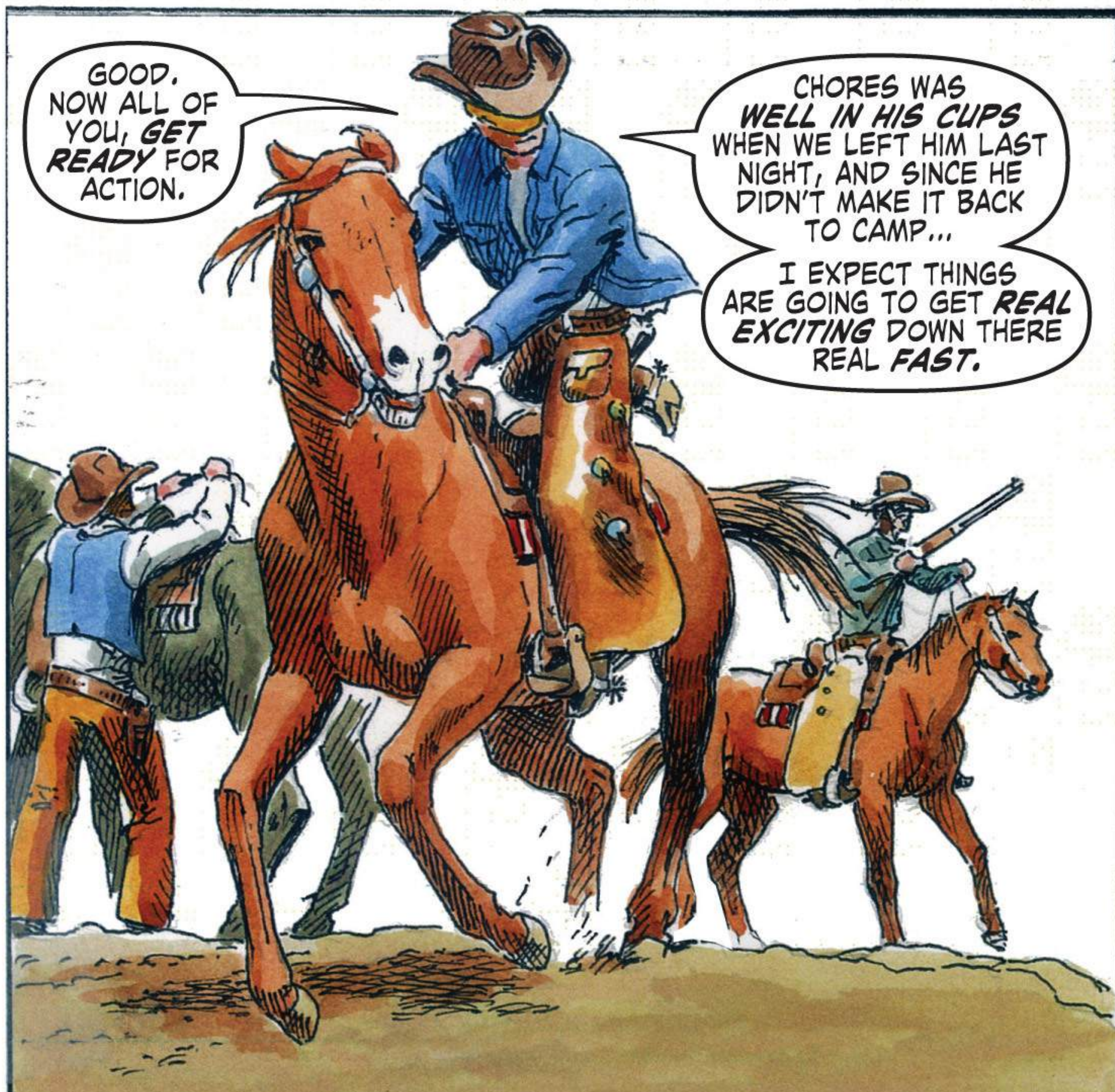
DAMMIT, WENDELL--I TOLD YOU--

YOU'RE NOT IRON FIST. YOU'RE NOT GONNA **BE** IRON FIST. AND THE SOONER YOU GET THAT DAMN FOOL IDEA OUT OF YOUR HEAD--



--THE LONGER YOU'LL LIVE. GOT IT?

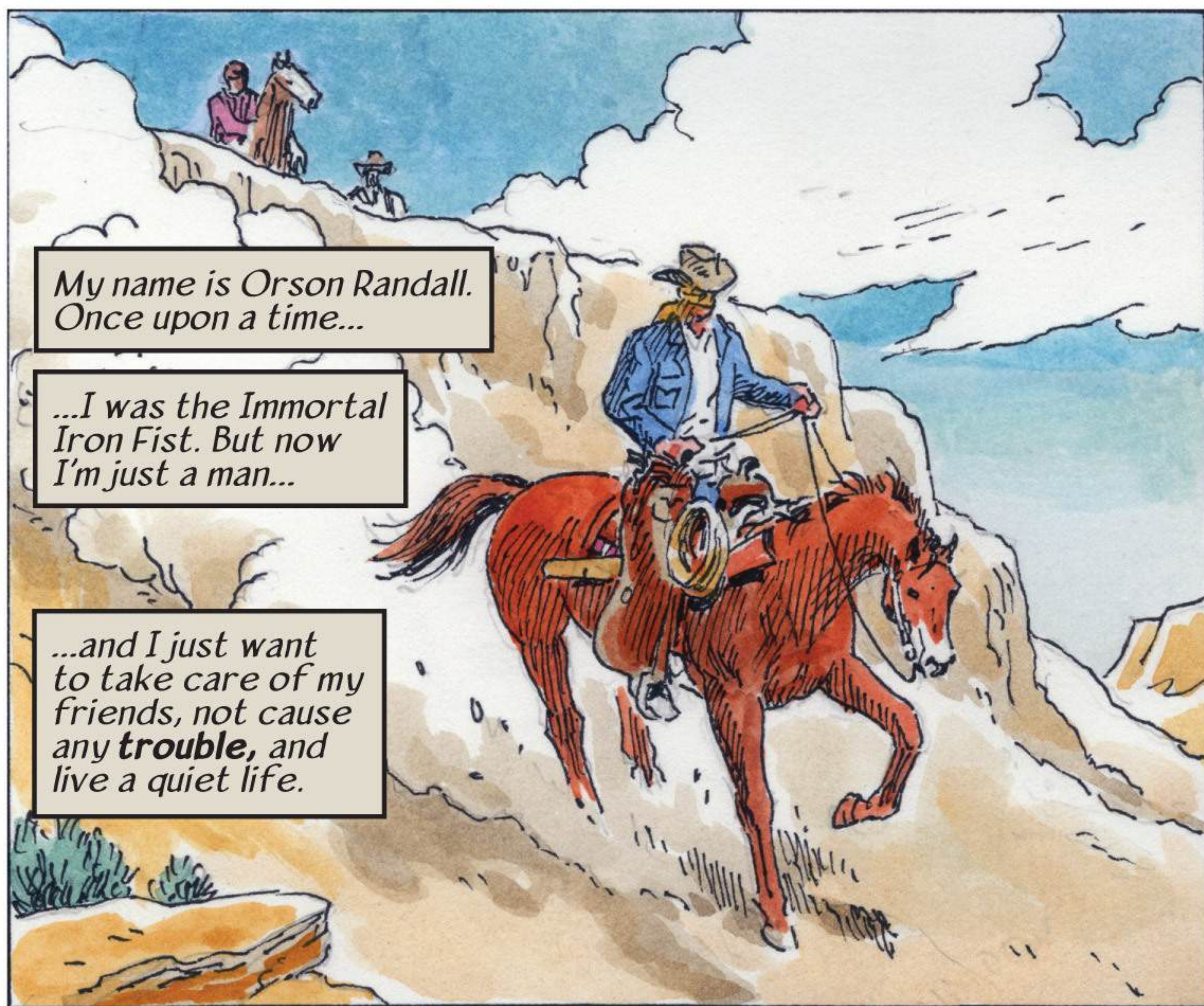
GOT IT.
JERK.



GOOD. NOW ALL OF YOU, **GET READY** FOR ACTION.

CHORES WAS **WELL** IN HIS CUPS WHEN WE LEFT HIM LAST NIGHT, AND SINCE HE DIDN'T MAKE IT BACK TO CAMP...

I EXPECT THINGS ARE GOING TO GET **REAL EXCITING** DOWN THERE **REAL FAST**.



My name is Orson Randall.
Once upon a time...

...I was the Immortal
Iron Fist. But now
I'm just a man...

...and I just want
to take care of my
friends, not cause
any **trouble**, and
live a quiet life.



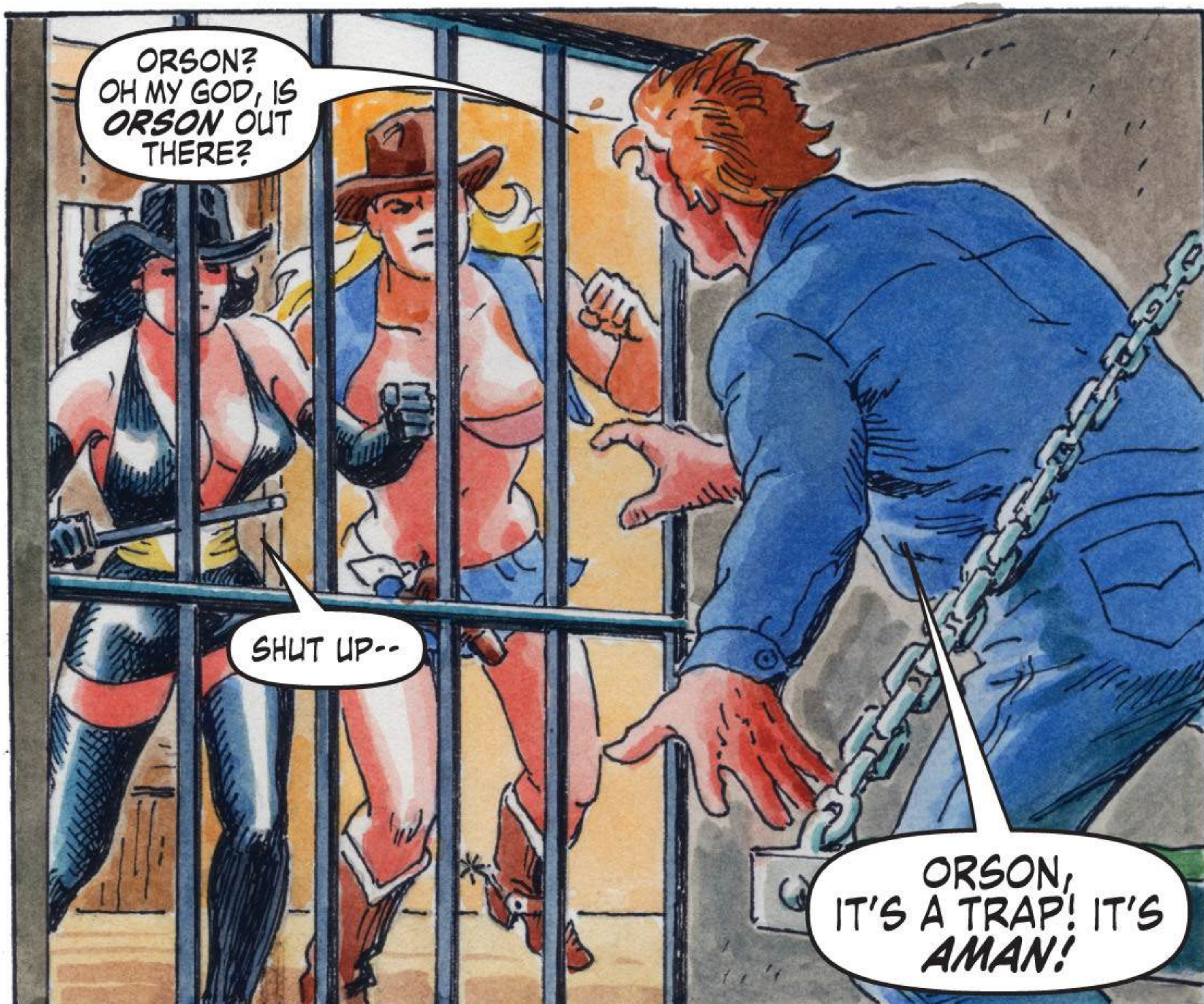
I'D LIKE
TO BAIL MY FRIEND
OUT AND NEVER DARKEN
YOUR DOORSTEP
AGAIN.

MA'AM.



WELL, WELL, WELL.

NEVER THOUGHT
I'D LIVE TO HEAR THE
LEGENDARY ORSON
RANDALL **BEG**.



ORSON?
OH MY GOD, IS
ORSON OUT
THERE?

SHUT UP--

ORSON,
IT'S A TRAP! IT'S
AMAN!

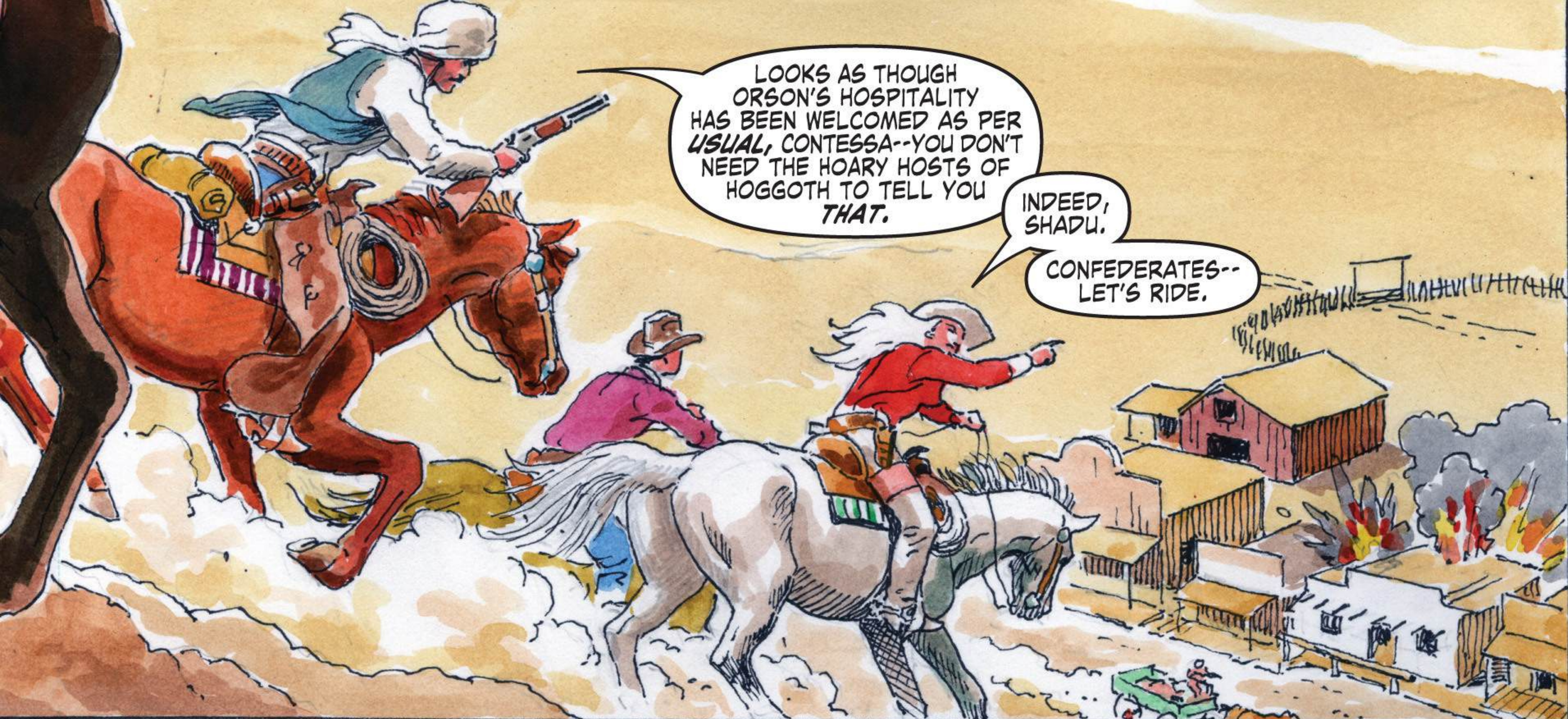


JOHN AMA



DAMMIT.

MA'AM,
I'D STEP
AWAY FROM
THAT DOOR
IF I WERE
YOU...



LOOKS AS THOUGH
ORSON'S HOSPITALITY
HAS BEEN WELCOMED AS PER
USUAL, CONTESSA--YOU DON'T
NEED THE HOARY HOSTS OF
HOGGOTH TO TELL YOU
THAT.

INDEED,
SHADU.

CONFEDERATES--
LET'S RIDE.



COWGIRLS
FROM HELL--TAKE
HIM D...

GIRLS,
GIRLS,
GIRLS--



I'M REALLY
NOT INTERESTED
IN ANYTHING
SERIOUS RIGHT
NOW.

GET 'EM,
BOSS!



GO AHEAD
AND *JOKE*,
RANDALL.

NO ONE
CAN SAVE
YOU NOW.



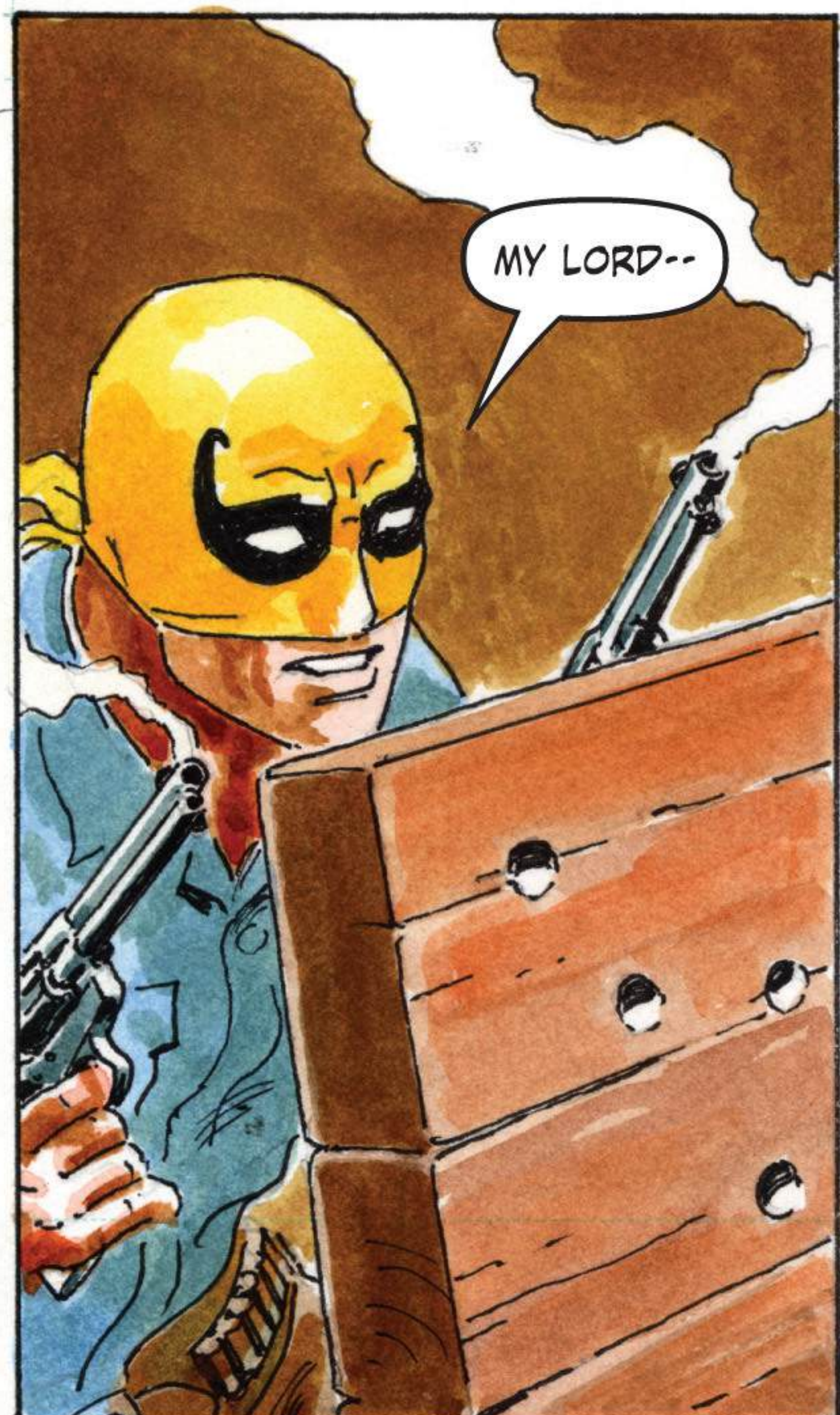
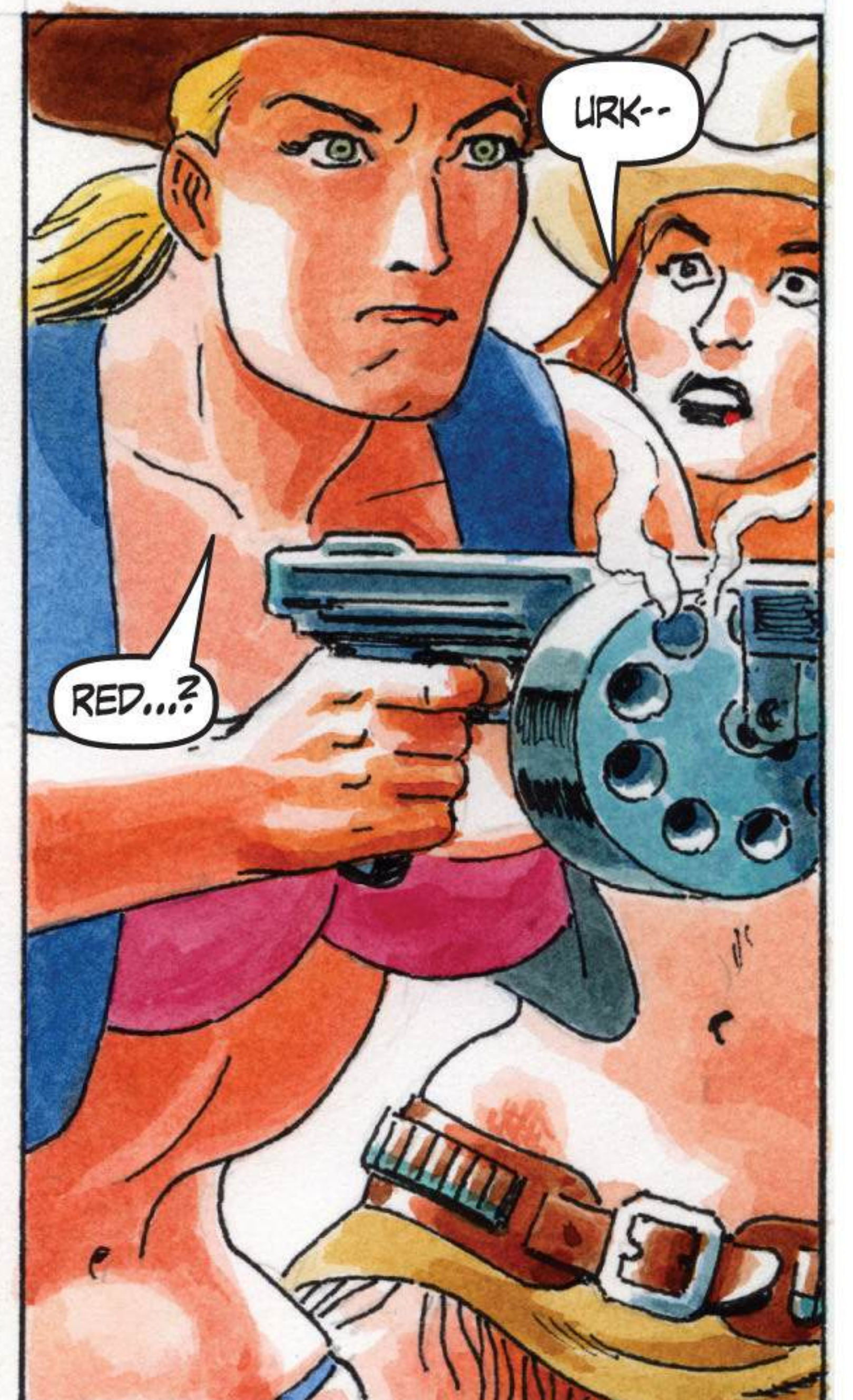
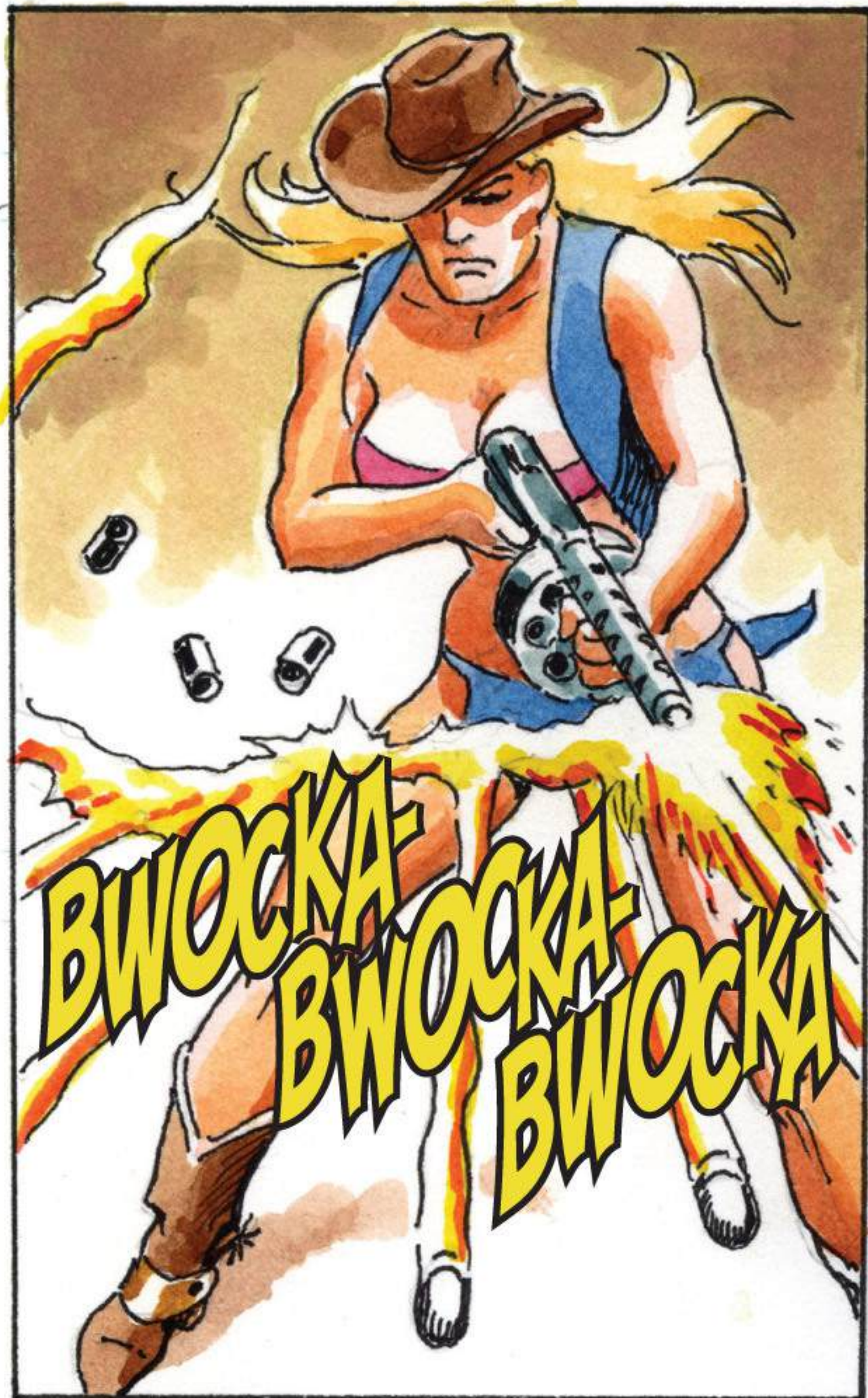
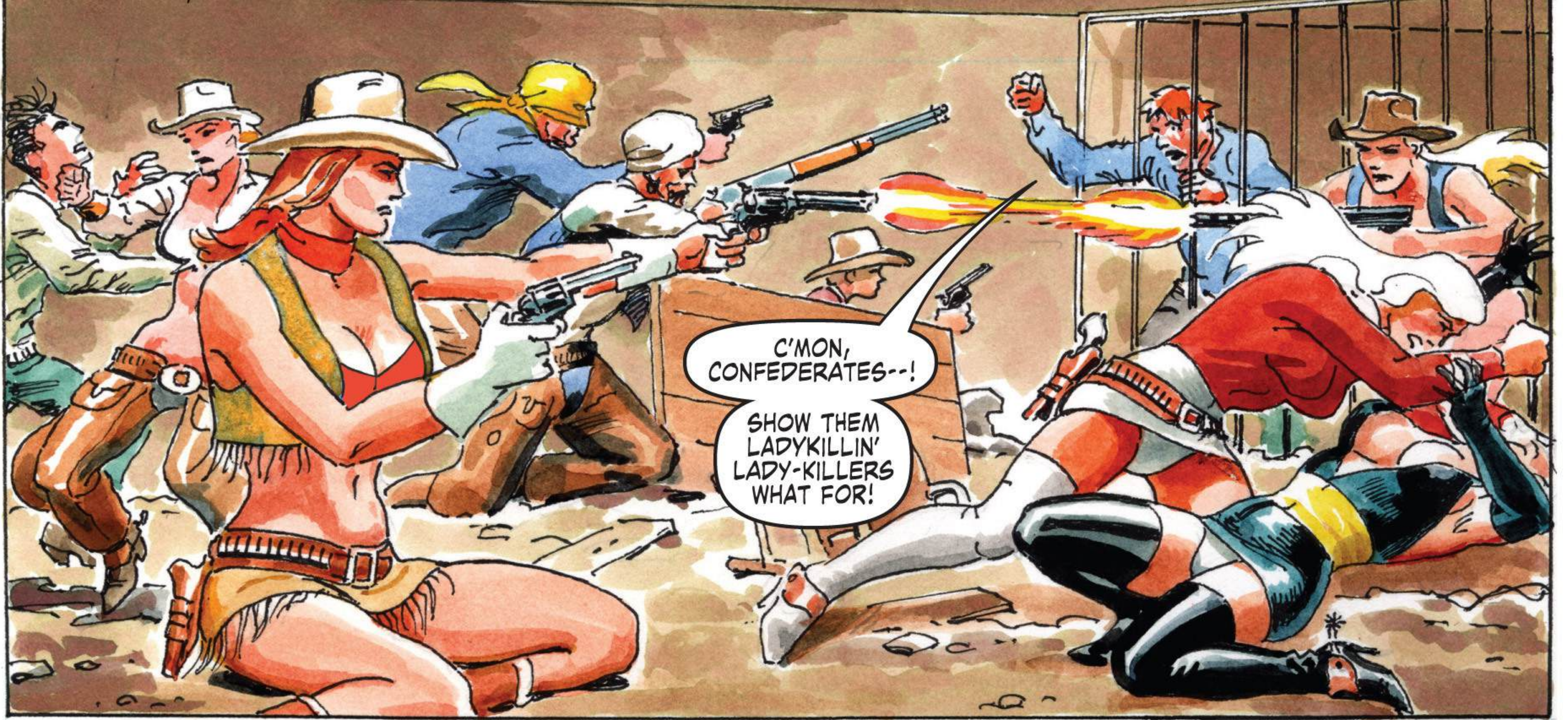
OH, I
DUNNO ABOUT
THAT...



"...I HAVE SOME PRETTY
DETERMINED FRIENDS."

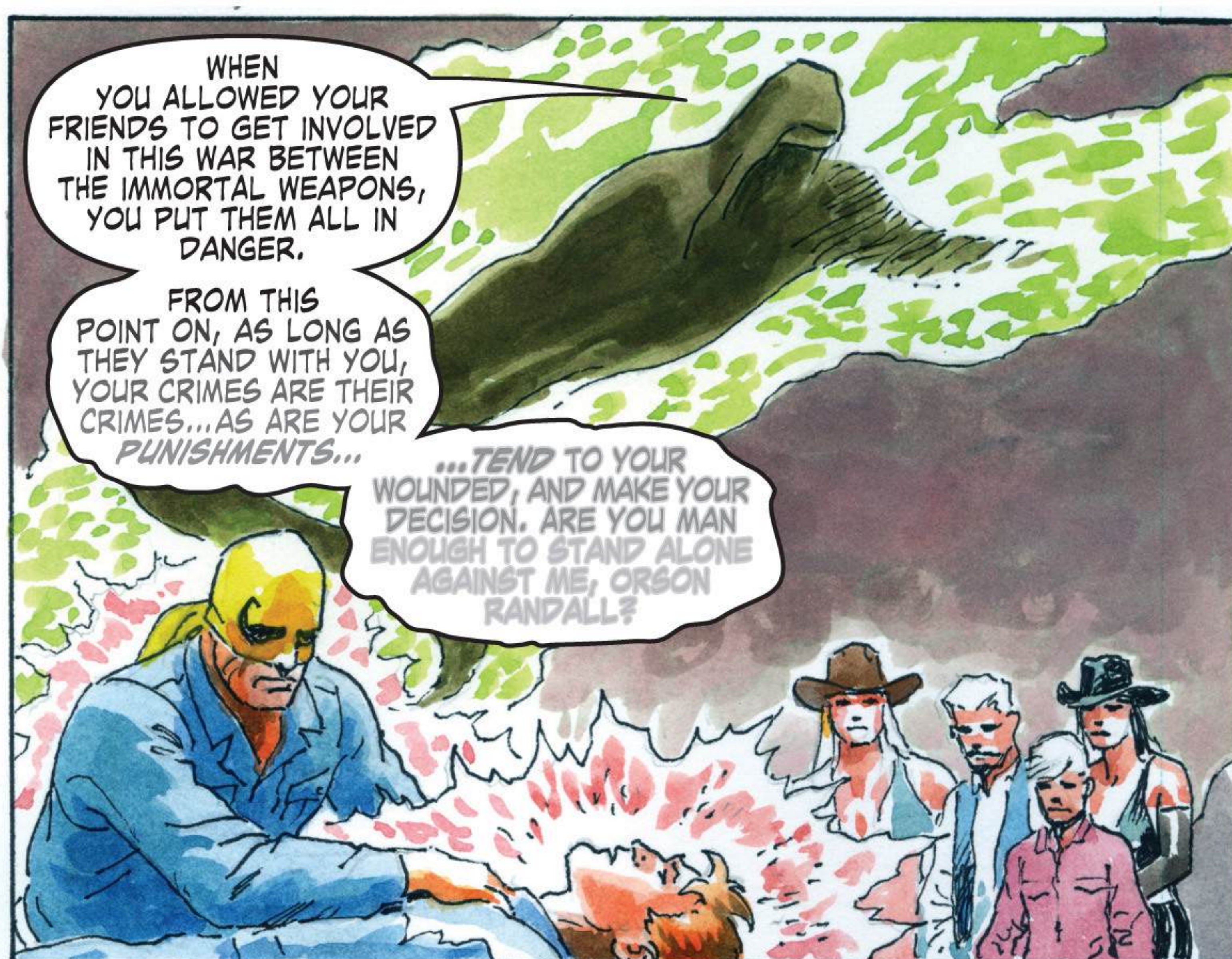
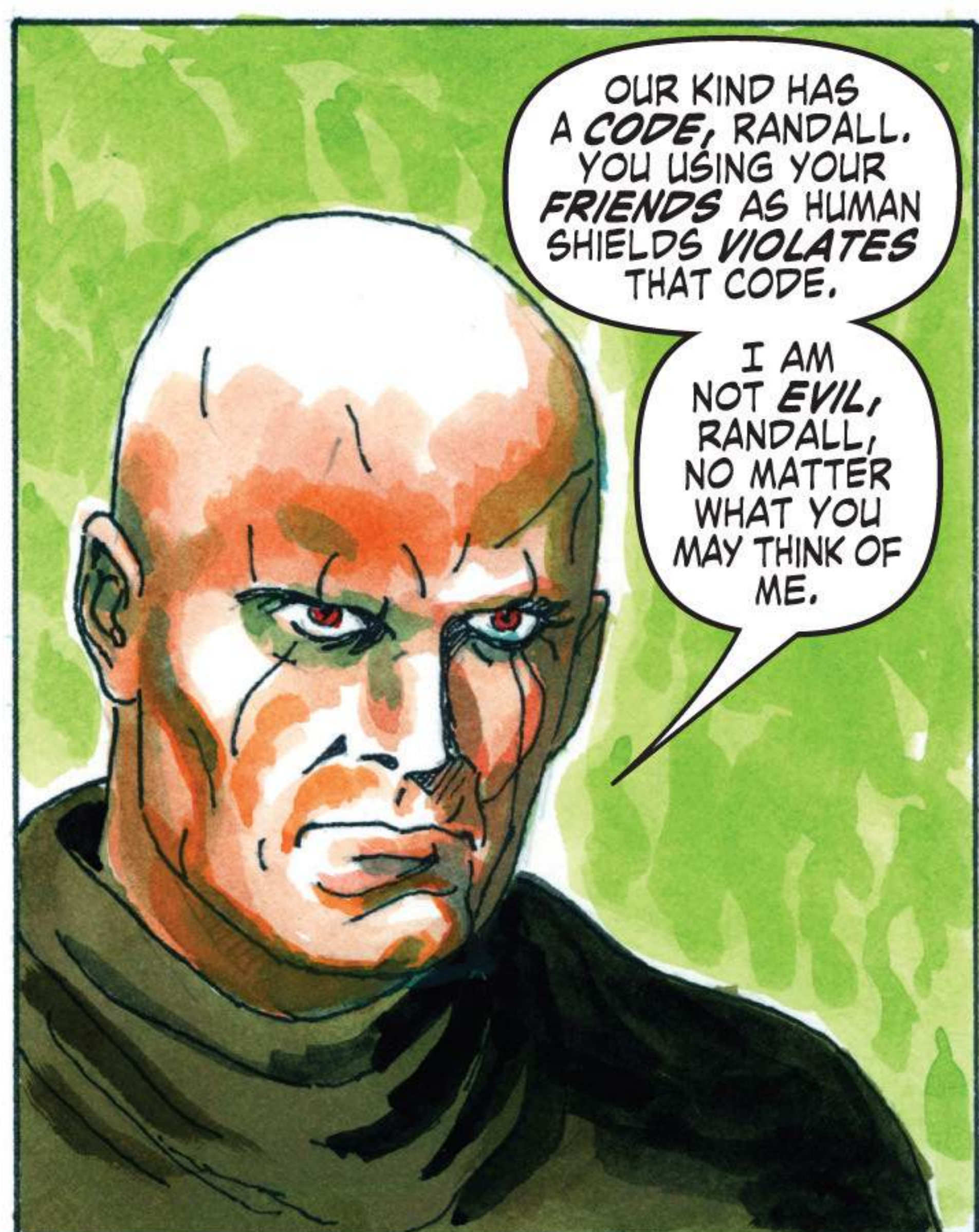
DON'T
SHOOT UNTIL YOU
SEE THE WHITES OF
THEIR THIGHS!

SALOON









"...I JUST CAN'T STAND BY
AND WATCH AS EVERYONE I
LOVE *DIES* IN MY ARMS..."

DAMMIT, KID...HOLD ON.
I'VE BEEN CARRYIN' YOU FOR ~~3HEFF3~~
THIRTY MILES NOW...IF YOU *BLEED OUT*
ON ME WHEN WE'RE *THIS CLOSE*,
I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF...

I'M...
I'MMA...

...I'MMA
IRON FIST. I
SHOWED THOSE
GUYS.

I SHOWED
'EM GOOD,
HUH?

I SHOWED
'EM HOW...

HOW TO *CATCH*
BULLETS...

I TOLD YOU
PLAYING AT BEING *IRON*
FIST WOULD GET YOU
KILLED, BOY...

AND IF
I DON'T GET YOU
UNDER THE KNIFE SOON,
YOU'LL HAVE PROVED
ME *RIGHT*.

THANK GOD
THE *CASTLE* IS STILL
HERE...



C'MON,
DAMMIT! LET
ME IN!

I KNOW
YOU'RE IN THERE...
I NEED HELP!



IT'S ORSON
RANDALL!

HELP!



RRRAAAAA!

GRRRNAAAAAR!!!



I WASN'T AFRAID OF YOU IN
GERMANY FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, AND I SURE AS
HELL AIN'T AFRAID OF YOU NOW.

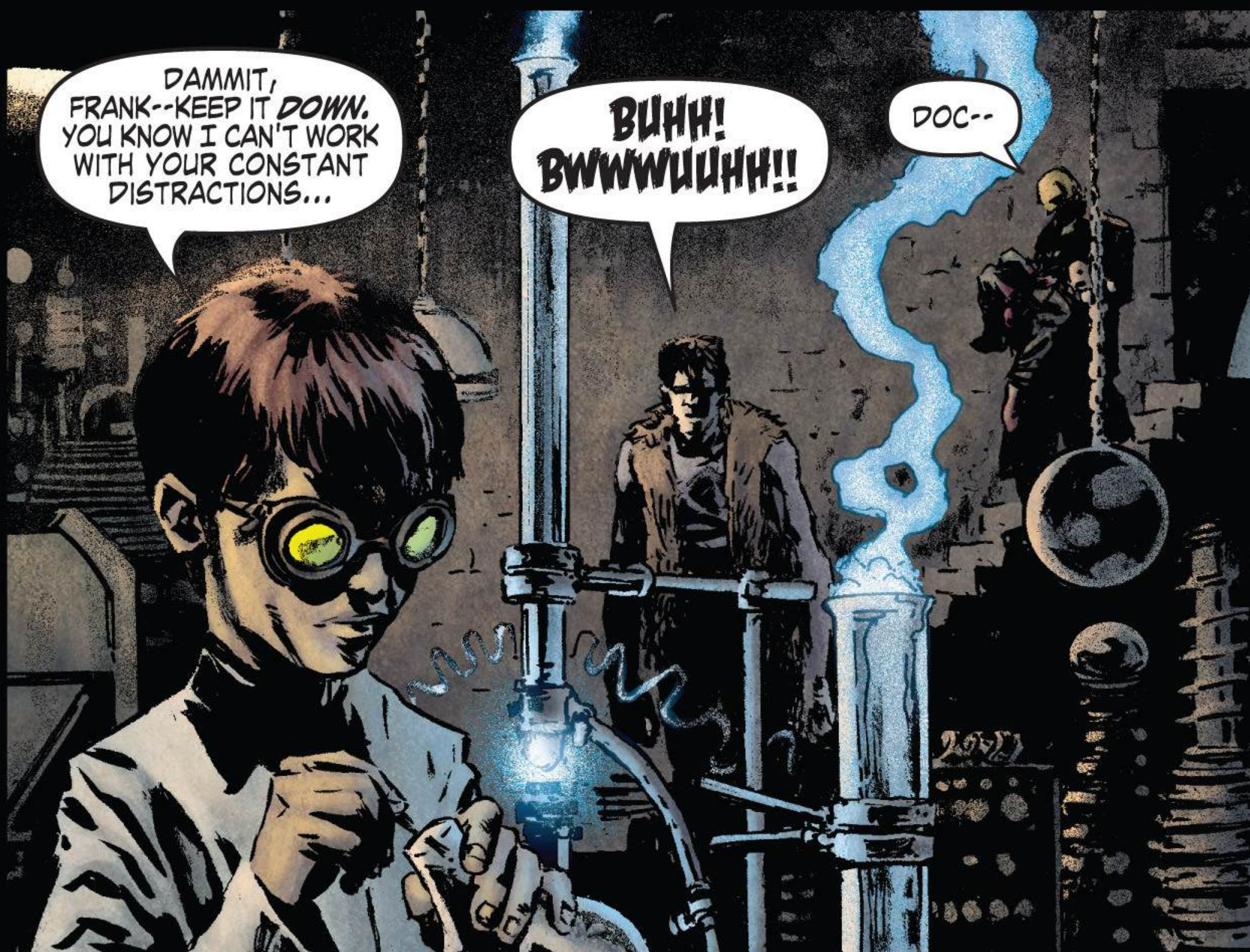


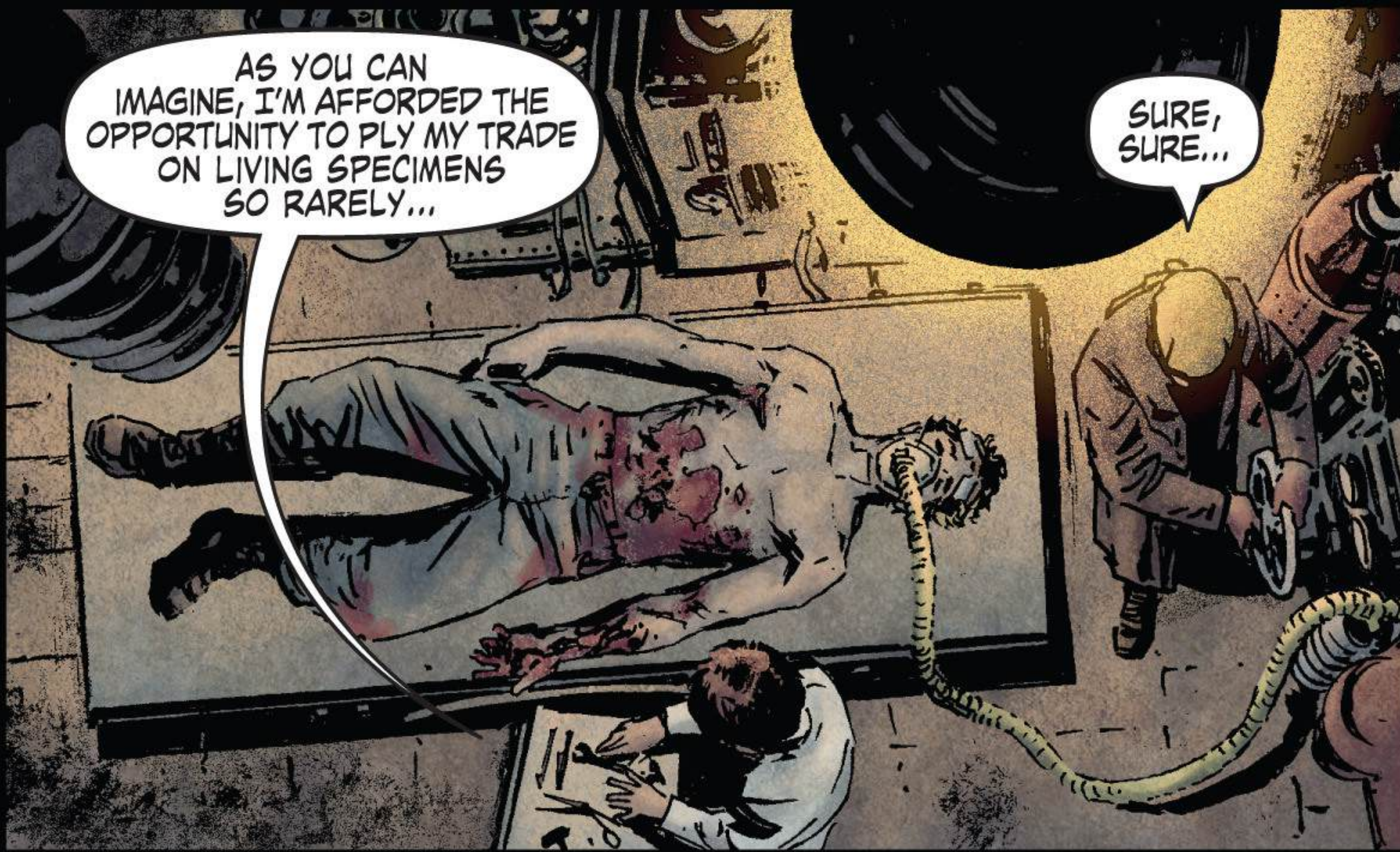
...



ORRRTH! ORRRRRTH!

YEAH, YEAH, YA LUG,
NOW LET US IN BEFORE THE
KID BLEEDS OUT...!





SURE,
SURE...



INSTEAD
OF THE COLD,
USELESS FLESH
OF THE DEAD...



IF I
DON'T MAKE IT,
I WANT YOU TO
HAVE 'EM...



THEY'RE
THE MOST
IMPORTANT
THING IN THE
WORLD TO
ME...



DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
IT, PAL--YOU'LL
BE BACK UP IN NO
TIME, WITH THESE
COINS JINGLIN'
IN YOUR POCKET
WHERE THEY
BELONG.



NNN!



KEFWANN



ZUUUUUGGG.

WUZZUH...
WHU?



DOC?
WHAT'S...

WHAT'S
GOING ON?
DID YOU
OPERATE?

NOT YET,
RANDALL.



SCIENCE
CAN'T BE
RUSHED.

I TAUGHT
YOUR *FATHER*
THAT WHEN WE WERE
ROOMMATES AT
UNIVERSITY.

TOO MUCH TO
ASK, I SUPPOSE, TO
EXPECT HIM TO PASS MY
LESSONS OF WISDOM
ON TO THE NEXT
GENERATION...

MY...
FATHER?
WHAT?

DOC, I
FEEL ALL SCREWY--
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU
TALKING ABOUT? HOW
CAN YOU KNOW MY
FATHER...?

WRRRR!
WRRRR!





ISN'T IT
OBVIOUS, RANDALL?
I'M NOT THE *SON* OF
FRANKENSTEIN...



...I *AM*
FRANKENSTEIN!



I TRANSPLANTED
MY PRICELESS AND IRREPLACEABLE
BRAIN INTO THE BODY OF MY *USELESS*
SON TO ESCAPE THOSE DAMNED
GERMANS AND THEIR MOBS AND
PITCHFORKS--

--AND I'VE
REBUILT MY LABORATORY
HERE, ONE UNIQUE PIECE
AT A TIME UNTIL I COULD
ONCE AGAIN PERFORM
MY *MIRACLES*...



I'VE BEEN
PERFECTING MY
TECHNIQUES UNTIL THE
PERFECT SPECIMEN
CAME ALONG...

NEVER IN
A THOUSAND
YEARS WOULD
I HAVE DARED
DREAM...



...IT
WOULD'VE BEEN
*THE IMMORTAL
IRON FIST!*

A SOURCE
OF LIMITLESS POWER,
LIMITLESS ENERGY...!
IT WILL BE AS IF LIVING
INSIDE OF LIGHTNING
ITSELF.



I
ASSURE YOU,
MY DEAR
ORSON:

IT HAS
BEEN A VERY
LONG TIME SINCE
I'VE GONE TO
WORK ON A LIVING
SOUL. WHAT COMES
NEXT IS GOING
TO *HURT.*



SCREAM
ALL YOU LIKE--
AS ISOLATED AS
WE ARE UP HERE,
YOU CAN--

WHA--?



GAAHH--

NO--
NO NO
NO--

KUHHHHWUUCK!
HWWAAAACK!!



BUH-BUH-BUH--

BUT I'M
BRILLIANT--



WERE.

YOU **WERE**
BRILLIANT. NOW
YOU'RE JUST A
DEAD LITTLE
GHOUL.



AMAN.

HOW THE
HELL DID
YOU FIND US
HERE?



THE **COINS**.

I'VE BEEN
FOLLOWING THE **COINS**.
EACH OF THEM IS FROM A
DIFFERENT DIMENSION--SO
EACH OF THEM VIBRATES IN
A VERY UNIQUE WAY
TO ME.

ALL I DO
IS FOLLOW THE
VIBRATIONS.



GET UP,
RANDALL.

YOUR *WARD*
DOESN'T HAVE MUCH
TIME LEFT--



...OR BLOOD.

NNN.
NNNN.



GRAAAHHHH!!!!
RRRAHHHH!!!!

AMAN--
WATCH OUT! THE
MONSTER--



THE MONSTER
MEANS US NO *HARM*,
RANDALL. HE ONLY ATTACKED
YOU BECAUSE THE DOCTOR
ORDERED IT. THIS ONE HAS
SEEN ENOUGH VIOLENCE
TO LAST A LIFETIME,
HAVEN'T YOU...?

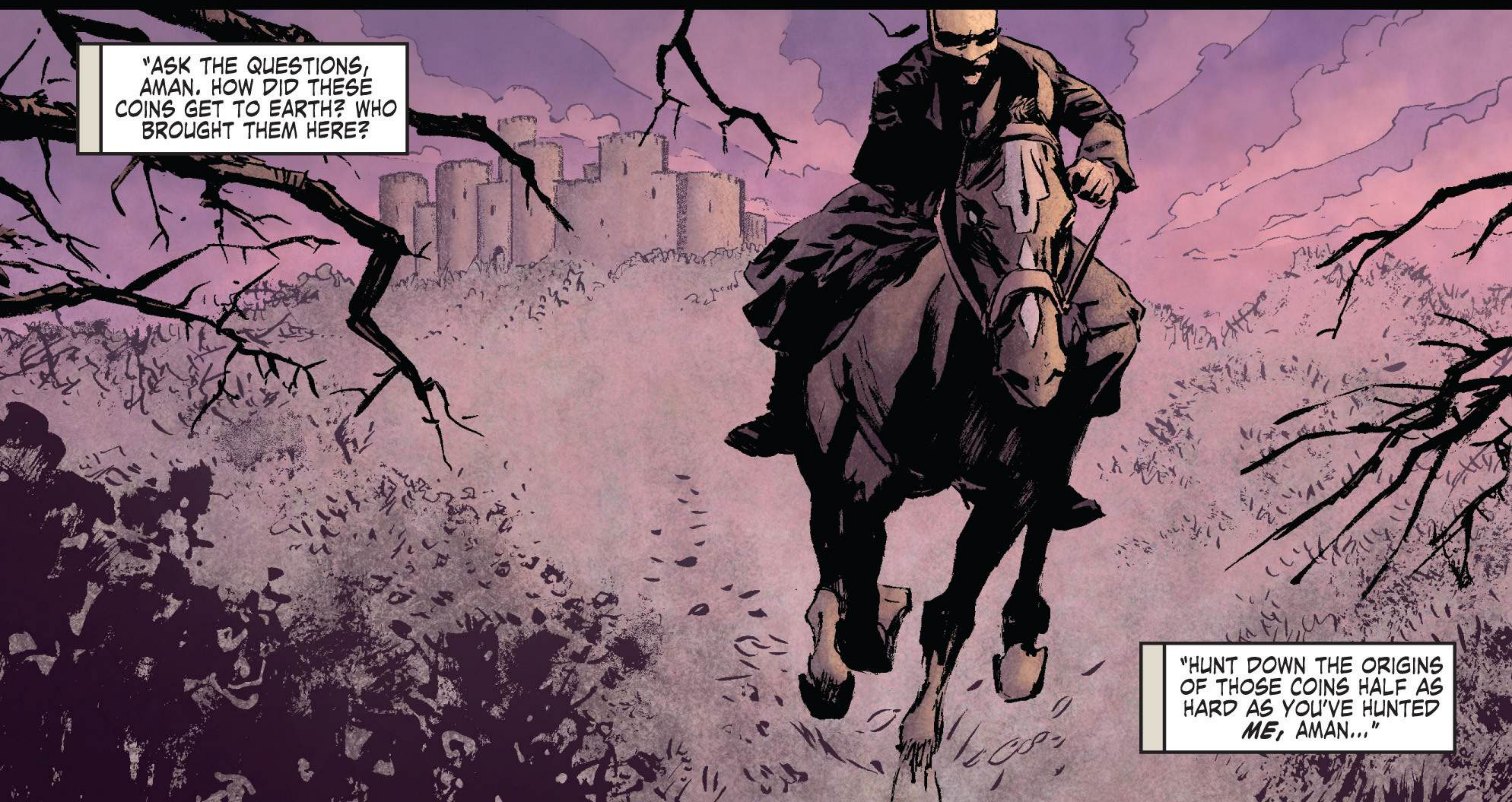
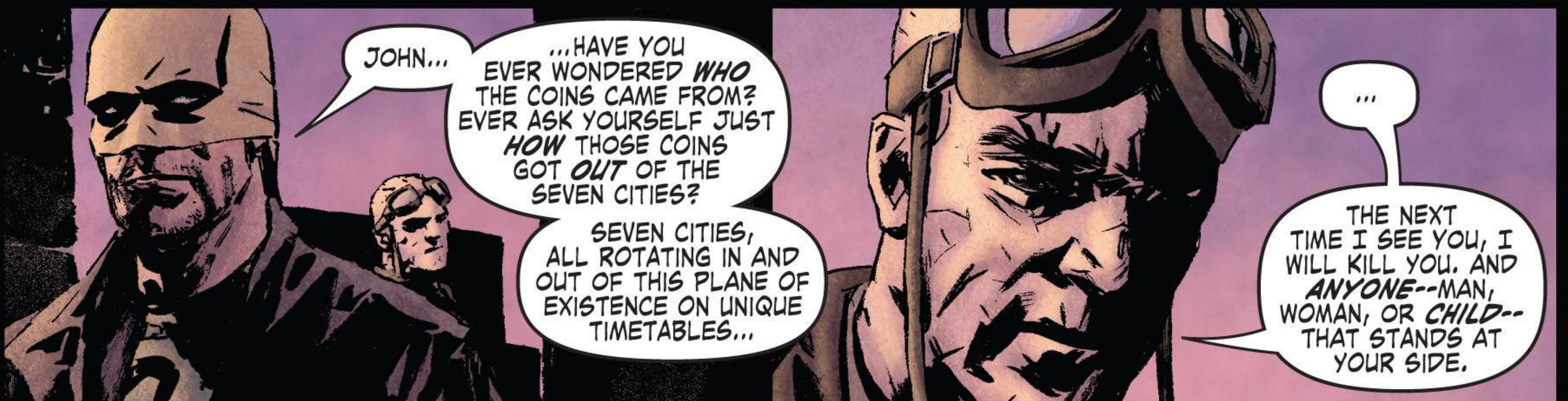
QUICKLY,
NOW--YOUR
WARD.



HOW'S HE
DOING?

THESE SLUGS
TORE RIGHT THROUGH
HIM--LUCKILY, THERE
DOESN'T SEEM TO BE
MUCH *ORGAN*
DAMAGE.

IF WE CAN
STOP THE BLEEDING
AND FOCUS OUR CHI ON HIM,
HE JUST MIGHT HAVE A
FIGHTING CHANCE...



"...AND IT'LL BE A COLD DAY
IN *HELL* THAT YOU AND I
FACE EACH OTHER AGAIN..."

RANDALL!
ORSON
RANDALL!

DAMMIT, MAN--
I JUST HUNTED AND
SLAUGHTERED THE MIDNIGHT
MIGOU OF THE PRECIPICE
PERILOUS---SHIC--

--SO UNLESS
YOU'RE COMIN' BY TO
INQUIRE AS TO THE
ROOM TO LET--

--YOU BEST
LET ME DRINK
MYSELF TO DEATH
IN *PEACE*.

THIS
TELEGRAM, SIR--
IT CAME FROM
FRANCE!

SOMEWHERE IN
PARIS, YOUR FATHER IS ON
HIS *DEATHBED*!



MY FATHER
IS DYING. I NEED
YOUR HELP GETTING IN
TO SEE HIM SO--

--SO I CAN SAY
GOODBYE.



PLEASE, L.P.
HELP ME. I
DIDN'T KNOW WHO
ELSE I COULD
TURN TO.

AND I
THINK IT'S A
TRAP.



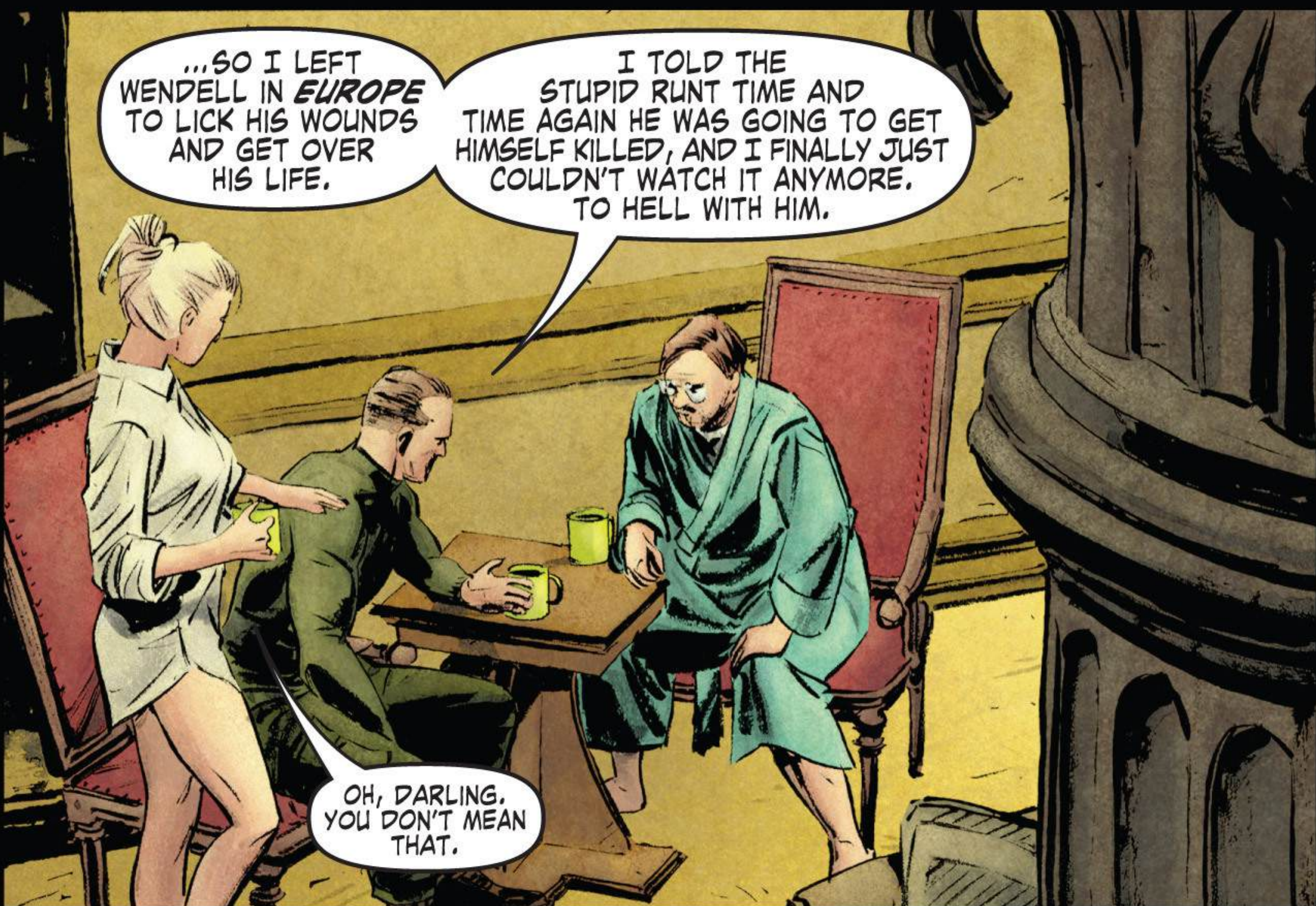
OF COURSE.
COME IN.

VERA,
WILL YOU
PUT THE
COFFEE
ON?



I TOLD YOU TEN THOUSAND
TIMES, DARLING--UNLESS
YOU'RE PULLING MY HAIR OR
POLISHING MY BOOTS,
IT'S CONTESSA.

COFFEE'LL
BE RIGHT UP.



...SO I LEFT
WENDELL IN *EUROPE*
TO LICK HIS WOUNDS
AND GET OVER
HIS LIFE.

I TOLD THE
STUPID RUNT TIME AND
TIME AGAIN HE WAS GOING TO GET
HIMSELF KILLED, AND I FINALLY JUST
COULDN'T WATCH IT ANYMORE.
TO HELL WITH HIM.

OH, DARLING.
YOU DON'T MEAN
THAT.



THE
HELL I DON'T.
I DON'T HAVE
ROOM IN MY LIFE
TO CARE ABOUT
ANYBODY
ANYMORE.

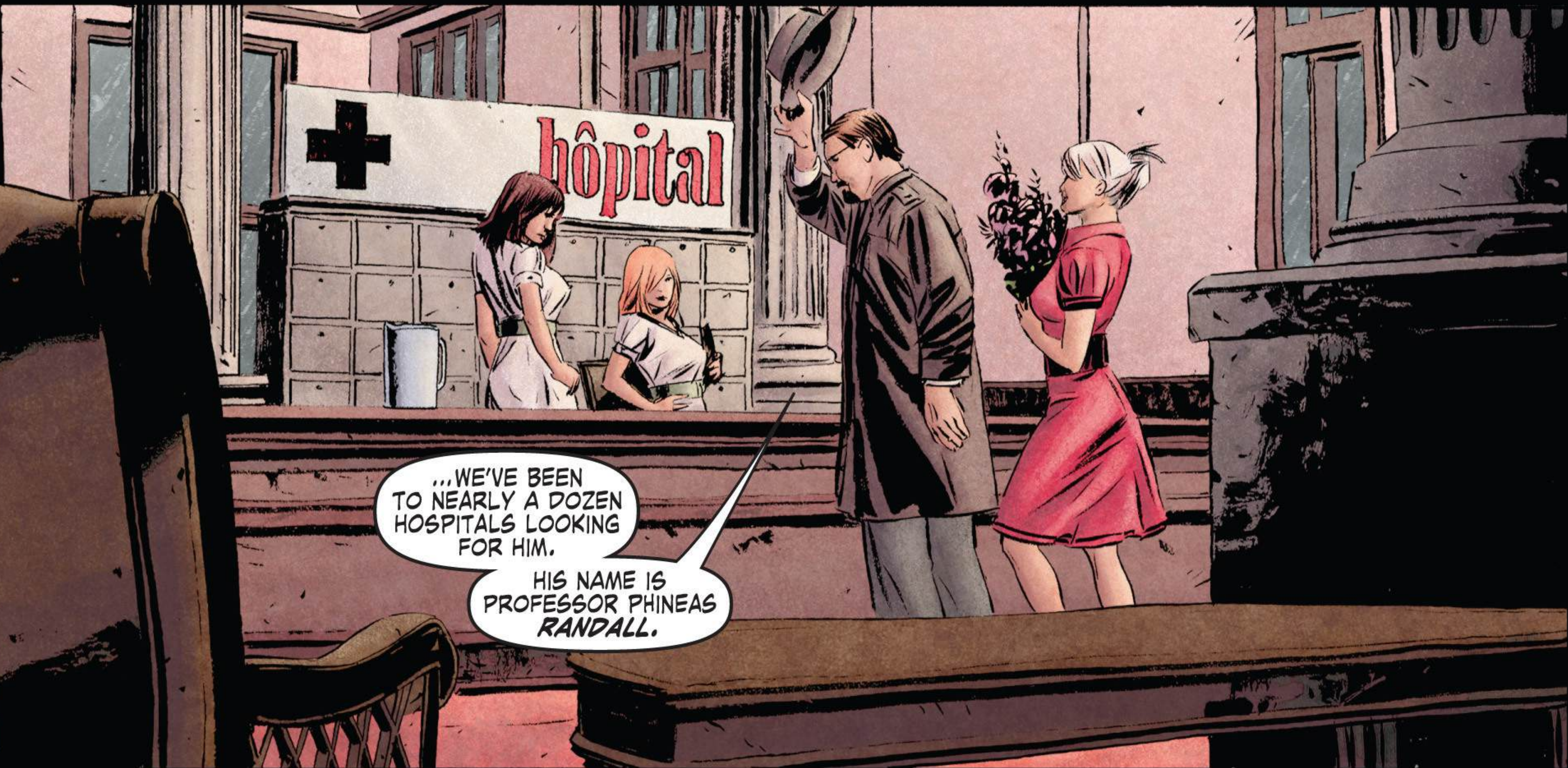
THE *PRINCE OF
ORPHANS* HAS TAKEN MY
FRIENDS, MY PROTEGE...AND
NOW HE'S TRYING TO TAKE
MY FATHER.

I THINK THE BASTARD
IS USING MY DYING FATHER
AS *BAIT*...



"WELL, ORSON, THERE ARE ABOUT THIRTY HOSPITALS IN PARIS...THE SOONER WE GET STARTED, THE SOONER WE'LL FIND HIM."

HELLO THERE, MADEMOISELLE, MY *WIFE* AND I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE THESE FLOWERS FOR A SICK PATIENT FRIEND OF OURS, BUT WE'RE NOT SURE HE'S HERE...



...WE'VE BEEN TO NEARLY A DOZEN HOSPITALS LOOKING FOR HIM.

HIS NAME IS PROFESSOR PHINEAS RANDALL.



NO ONE HERE BY THAT NAME. MUST HAVE THE WRONG HOSPITAL.

YOU HAVE TO *LEAVE*--FOR THE GOOD OF OUR PATIENTS.

THEY NEED ABSOLUTE *BED-REST* AND *QUIET*.



YOU SEE THAT *RING*? THIS IS A *HYDRA* HOSPITAL.

IF *HYDRA'S* HERE, *AMAN'S* HERE.

FOUR *ORDERLIES* GUARDING ROOM *SIX*. TEN GETS YOU TWENTY THAT MEANS...



"...ORSON RANDALL'S GOING TO BE BREAKING INTO ROOM SIX COME NIGHTFALL!"

FATHER.
IT'S ME.





I *KNEW* THIS HAD TO BE SOME KIND OF SETUP.



GREEN MIST.
OF COURSE.



I TOLD YOU NO ONE YOU DARED LOVE WAS SAFE FROM ME, ORSON RANDALL.



YOUR FATHER'S ILLNESS WAS BEYOND TERMINAL, EVEN FOR MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES AS SOPHISTICATED AS HIS.
OF COURSE, IT WAS NOT TOO SOPHISTICATED FOR THE TECHNOLOGIES IN MY JUNGLE KINGDOM OF Z'GAMBO, WHERE I AM PROLONGING HIS LIFE...



NOW, YOU'LL ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE ESCORTED *HERE* UNDER WATCH OF MY MEN.

I'LL PERMIT YOU TO SEE YOUR FATHER ONE LAST TIME IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR MISERABLE LIFE...

YEAH, YEAH, I GET THE PICTURE.



WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
LET'S GO TO THE JUNGLE.



THIS WAY.

YEAH, YEAH. REAL TOUGH GUY WITH A GUN, HUH?



WHY ARE YOU *UNCUFFING* ME?

YOU KNOW HOW MY *ABILITIES* WORK, RIGHT?

SILENCE!

FORGIVE THE *GUARD* FOR DOING HIS JOB, RANDALL.

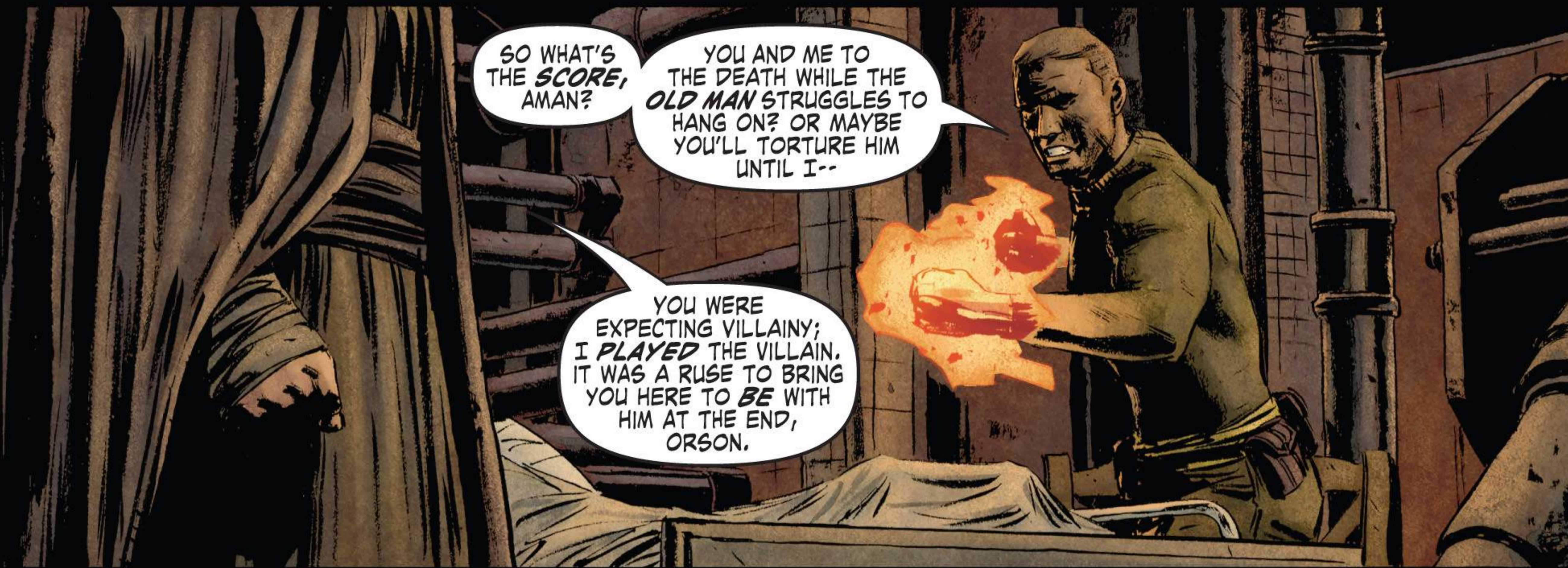


YOUR FATHER DOESN'T HAVE LONG.

I CAN PERFORM THE *MIRACULOUS* BUT VERY FEW ACTUAL MIRACLES.



WHY DID YOU--
DAD?!



SO WHAT'S THE **SCORE**, AMAN?

YOU AND ME TO THE DEATH WHILE THE **OLD MAN** STRUGGLES TO HANG ON? OR MAYBE YOU'LL TORTURE HIM UNTIL I--

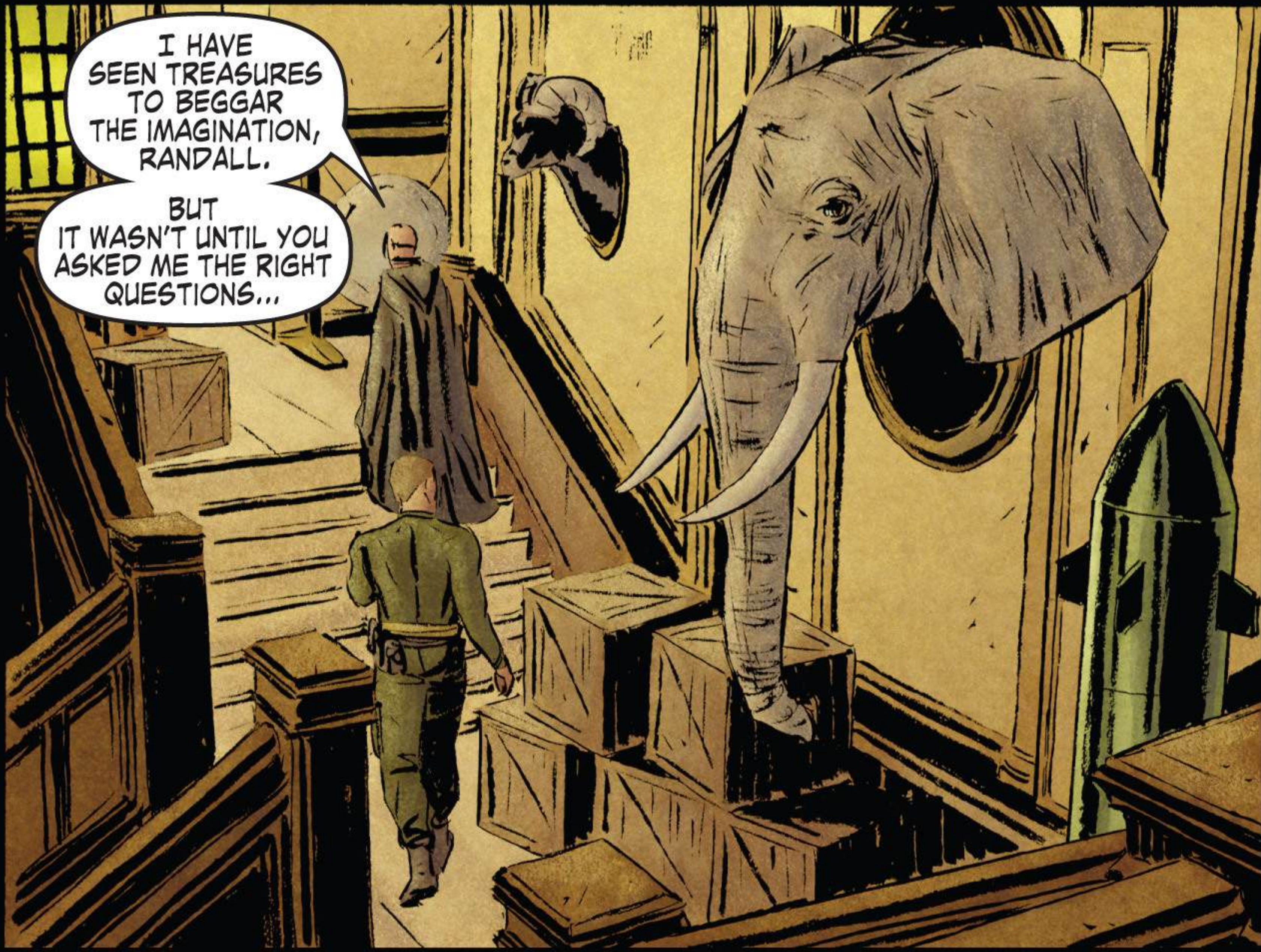
YOU WERE EXPECTING VILLAINY; I **PLAYED** THE VILLAIN. IT WAS A RUSE TO BRING YOU HERE TO **BE** WITH HIM AT THE END, ORSON.



YOUR FATHER WILL NOT BE HARMED, AND BY THIS, I HOPE TO EARN YOUR **TRUST**.

CONSIDER IT A TOKEN OF **APOLOGY** FOR MY YEARS OF TROUBLING YOU.

SEE, I **LISTENED** TO WHAT YOU SAID TO ME WHEN WE LAST MET. COME WITH ME TO THE TROPHY ROOM.



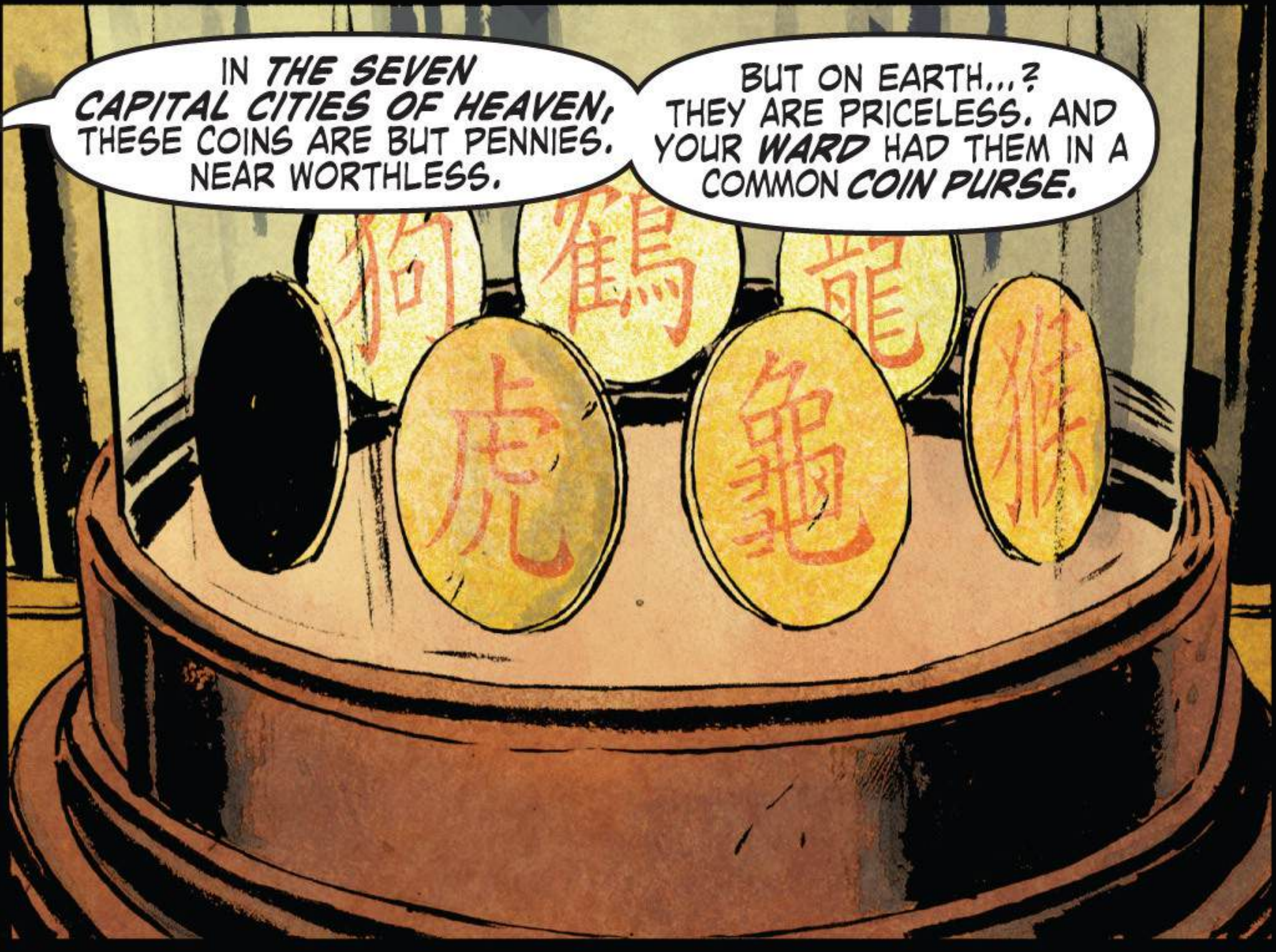
I HAVE SEEN TREASURES TO BEGGAR THE IMAGINATION, RANDALL.

BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL YOU ASKED ME THE RIGHT QUESTIONS...



...THAT I ASKED THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, AND REALIZED JUST HOW PROFOUNDLY IMPOSSIBLE THESE SEVEN COINS WERE.

AS OBJECTS, GATHERED TOGETHER, AT ONCE.



IN THE **SEVEN CAPITAL CITIES OF HEAVEN**, THESE COINS ARE BUT PENNIES. NEAR WORTHLESS.

BUT ON EARTH...? THEY ARE PRICELESS. AND YOUR **WARD** HAD THEM IN A COMMON **COIN PURSE**.



YOU IMploRED ME TO INVESTIGATE THEM. I DID.

THAT LED ME TO YOUR FATHER-- I BROUGHT HIM HERE TO **SAVE HIM**, BUT HE IS TOO FAR GONE. BUT BEFORE HE GOES I NEED **ANSWERS**.

AND HE'S MADE IT CLEAR, HE WON'T ANSWER **ME** UNTIL HE KNOWS **YOU** APPROVE...



ORSON?

SON?
IS THAT
YOU?

HI,
POP.

WHO
IS THAT WITH
YOU?



THIS IS--
THIS IS MY FRIEND,
JOHN AMAN.

HE HAD
SOME *QUESTIONS* FOR
YOU, DAD--ABOUT *THE*
GATEWAYS.

YOU BUILT
GATEWAYS THAT OPENED
THE SPACE BETWEEN EARTH
AND THE *SEVEN CAPITAL*
CITIES OF HEAVEN,
YES?



OF COURSE!
I BUILT ONE IN *EACH* OF
THE CITIES, SO ITS PEOPLE
COULD COME AND GO AS THEY
PLEASED, NO LONGER HELD
HOSTAGE BY THE ARCAINE
CLOCKWORK OF THE
HEAVENS.

IN EXCHANGE,
THE CITIES FINANCED MY
EMPIRE OF HYPOTHETICAL
SCIENCE.



And just like that, Aman's
world comes crashing
down around him.

A life predicated
on laws, rules and
traditions revealed
to be a sham.

Aman, the ultimate soldier, had just
discovered his **generals** were lying to
him...doorways to Earth they swore
were shut had long been flung open...

THE ONLY
INVENTION OF MINE
THAT EVER MADE ANY
MONEY...

The old man fades in and out, high as a
kite and well out of pain. His lucidity
comes and goes with his consciousness.



HE'S
GONE.

A comic book panel showing Batman on the right, wearing his green suit with the bat symbol, and an older man with a beard on the left. The man is holding a knife to his throat. They are in a workshop with wooden walls and various tools.

Just like that, I'm an orphan too.

YOU MAY LEAVE, AS WELL. WHENEVER YOU LIKE. I SHALL HUNT YOU NO MORE.

And, just like that, the Prince of Orphans is a man without a country and a soldier without a mission.

A medium shot of Batman standing in the workshop, looking directly at the viewer with a serious expression.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU, AMAN? BACK TO THE CITIES? BACK TO--

A close-up of the older man's face as he speaks. He has a beard and is looking slightly to the side.

I'M NOT WHOLLY CERTAIN.
IT'S ALMOST REFRESHING.

A close-up of the older man's face. He is wearing goggles on his forehead and has a thoughtful or concerned expression.

BUT SOMEONE'S GOING TO PAY.

I KNOW THAT MUCH.

A side view of Batman leaning over a workbench, writing on a yellow notepad with a pen. A large mechanical arm is visible in the background.

I'LL BE NO MAN'S SOLDIER ANYMORE, YOU KNOW THAT, BUT--WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES REPULSED BY THE WAY THE CITIES ARE RUN.

HERE:

A close-up of a hand holding the yellow notepad. The notepad has a blue circular stamp on it. The background shows the workshop environment.

THE THUNDERER OF K'UN-LUN. THE COMBAT MASTER OF THE SHINING CITY. SEEK HIM OUT.



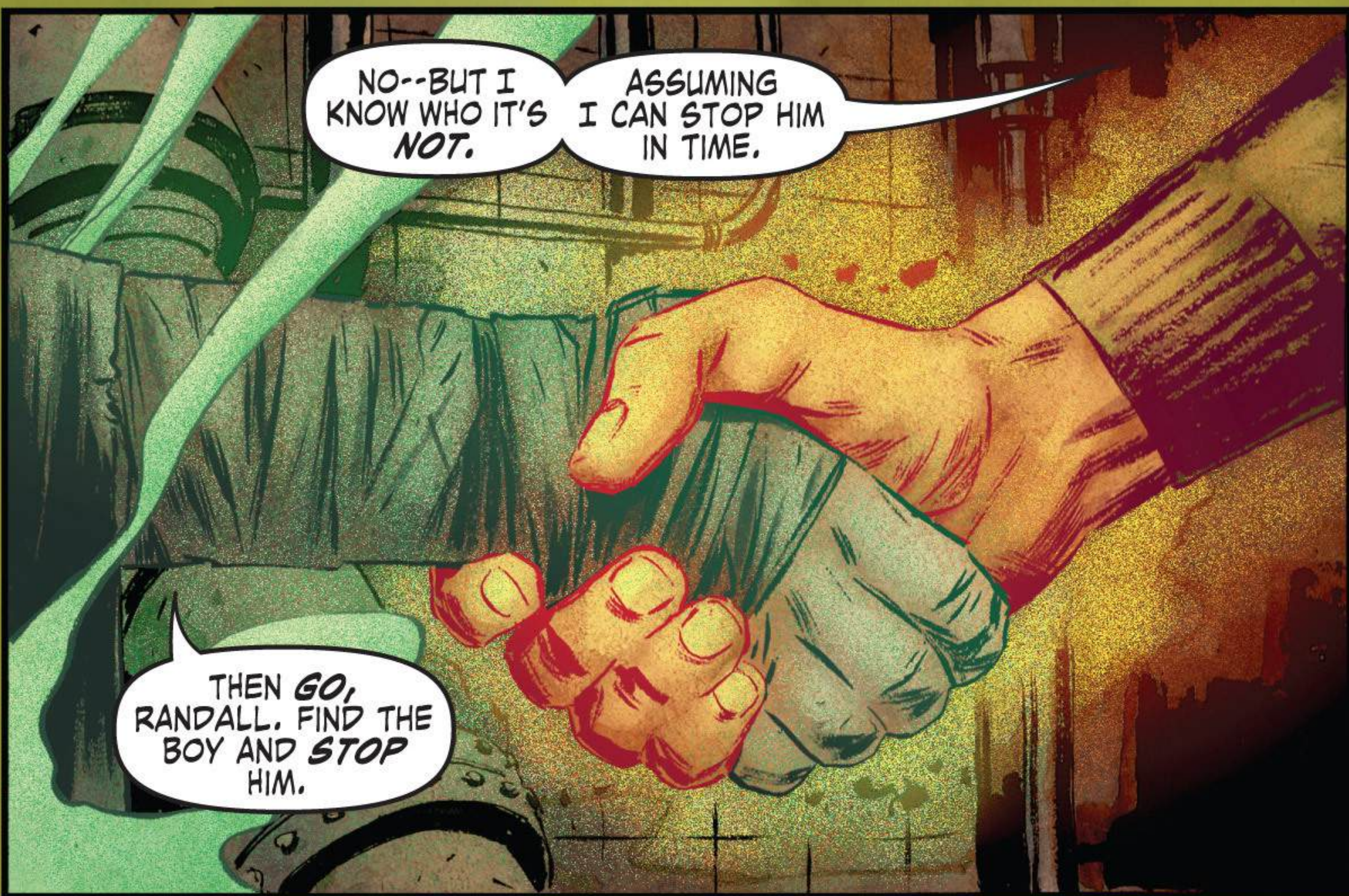
HE'S
RAISING AN ARMY.
PLANNING A REVOLUTION
FOR THE NEXT TIME
THE **SEVEN CITIES**
INTERSECT.

CARRY THIS MARK
SOMEWHERE ON YOUR
PERSON IF YOU WISH
TO ALLY YOURSELF
WITH HIM.

AND WHEN THE
TIME COMES...FIND MY
SUCCESSOR AND **FIGHT**
LIKE HELL.



...
DO
YOU KNOW WHO
THIS SUCCESSOR
WILL BE?



NO--BUT I
KNOW WHO IT'S
NOT.

ASSUMING
I CAN STOP HIM
IN TIME.

THEN **GO,**
RANDALL. FIND THE
BOY AND **STOP**
HIM.

One war
was over.

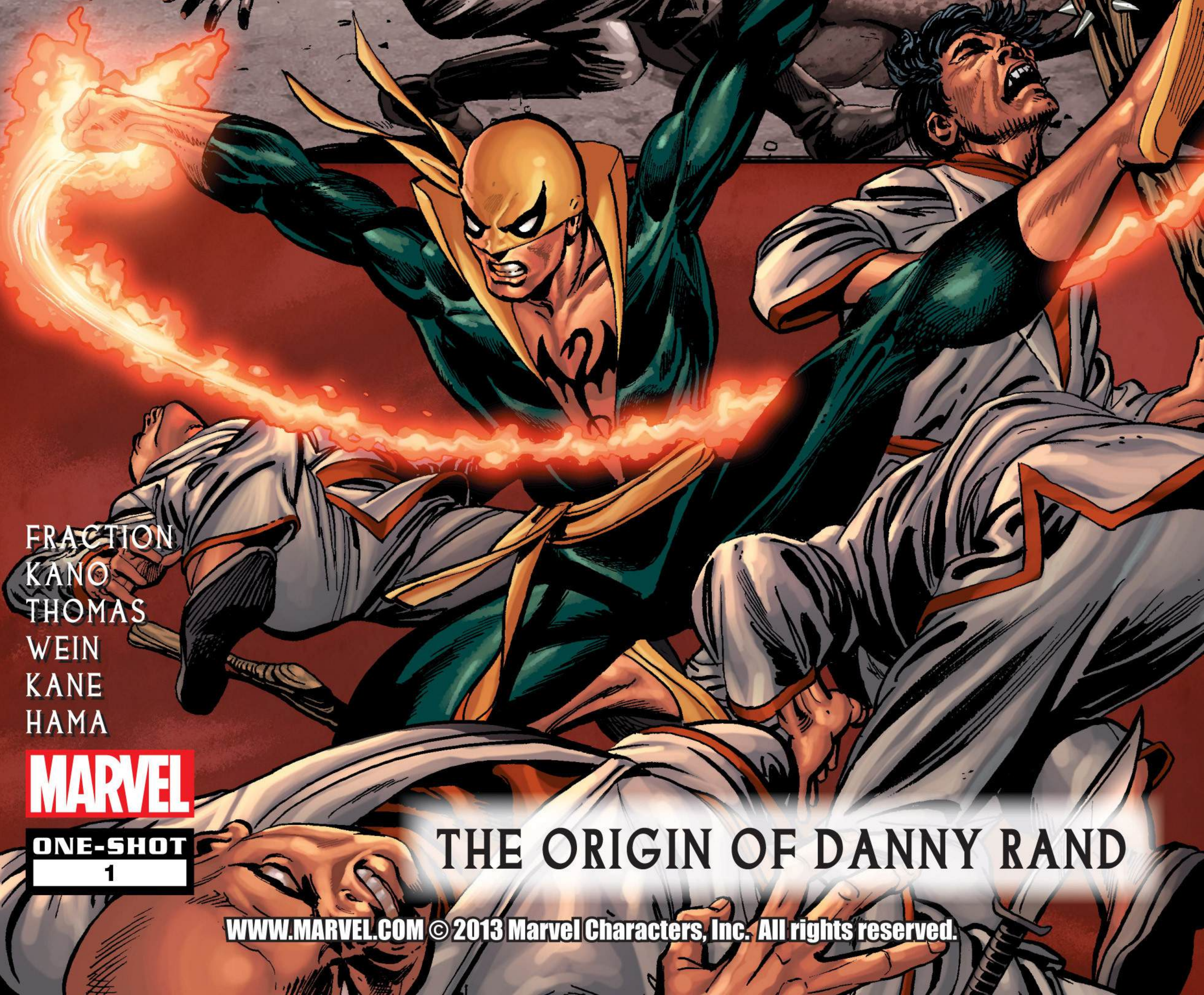
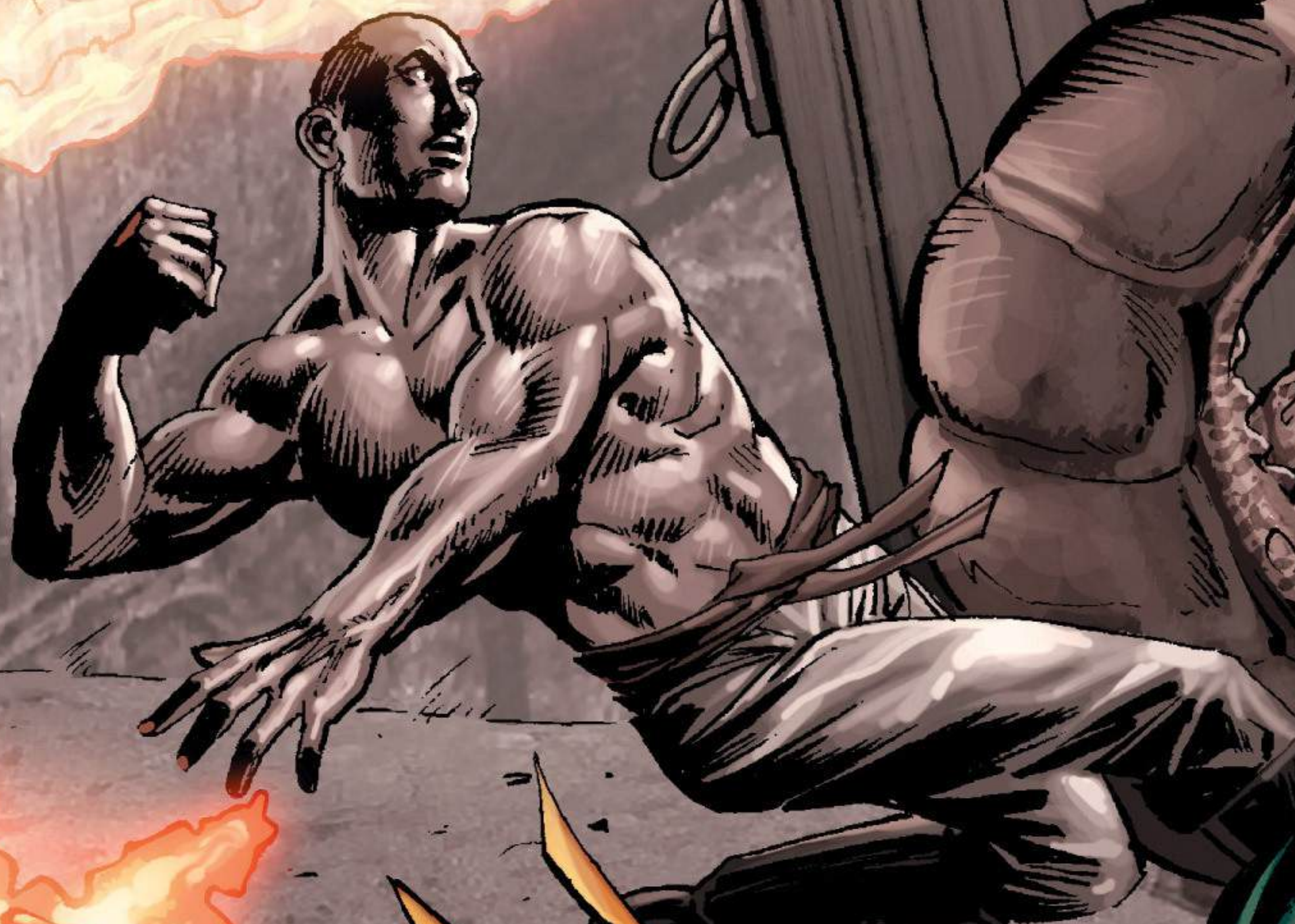
And another
had begun.

But not for me--
I'd had enough
bloodshed to
last a lifetime.

I went to find Wendell
Rand-- who may as
well have been my
own son--before his
would be spilled, too.

The saga of John Aman
continues next in
THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST #13

THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST®



FRACTION
KANO
THOMAS
WEIN
KANE
HAMA

MARVEL

ONE-SHOT
1

THE ORIGIN OF DANNY RAND

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THE IMMORTAL IRON FIST

THE ORIGIN OF DANNY RAND

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Artist: Kano
Letterer: Dave Lanphear

Chapter 1: "The Fury of Iron Fist"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Penciler: Gil Kane

Chapter 2: "Heart of the Dragon"
Writer: Len Wein
Penciler: Larry Hama

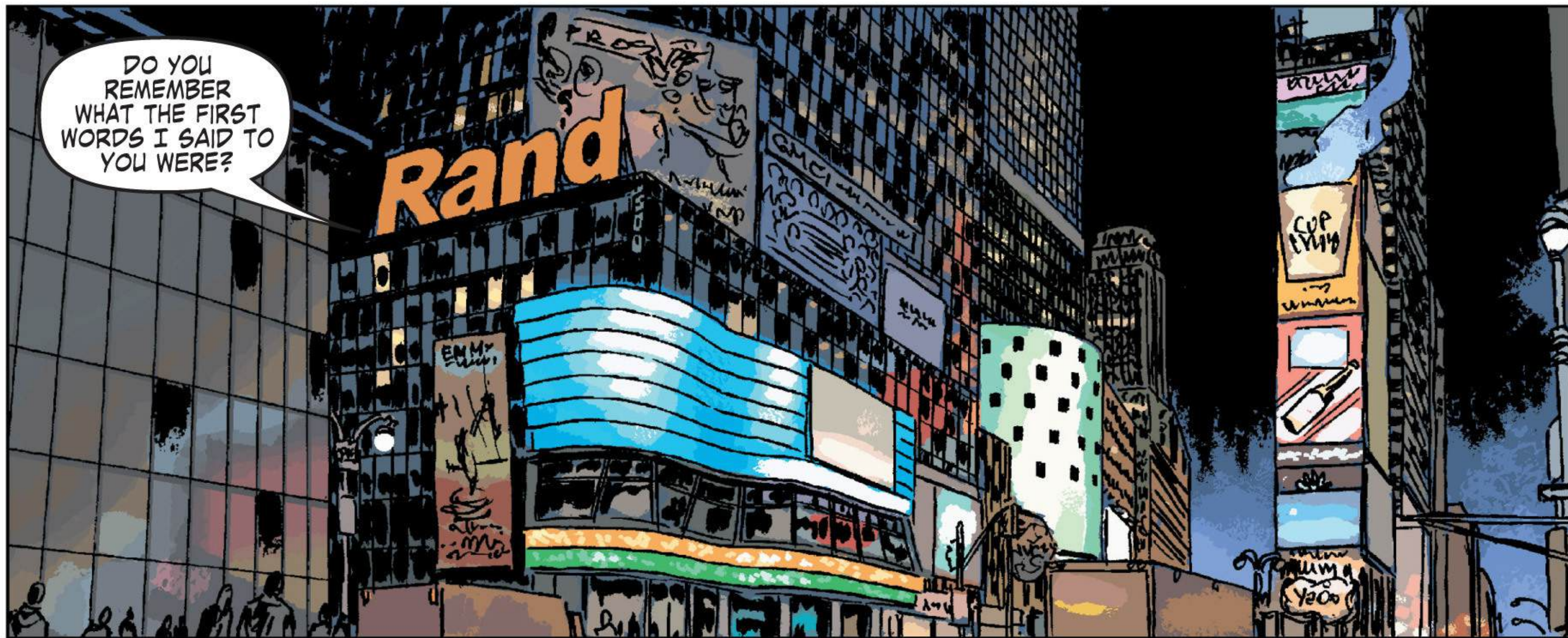
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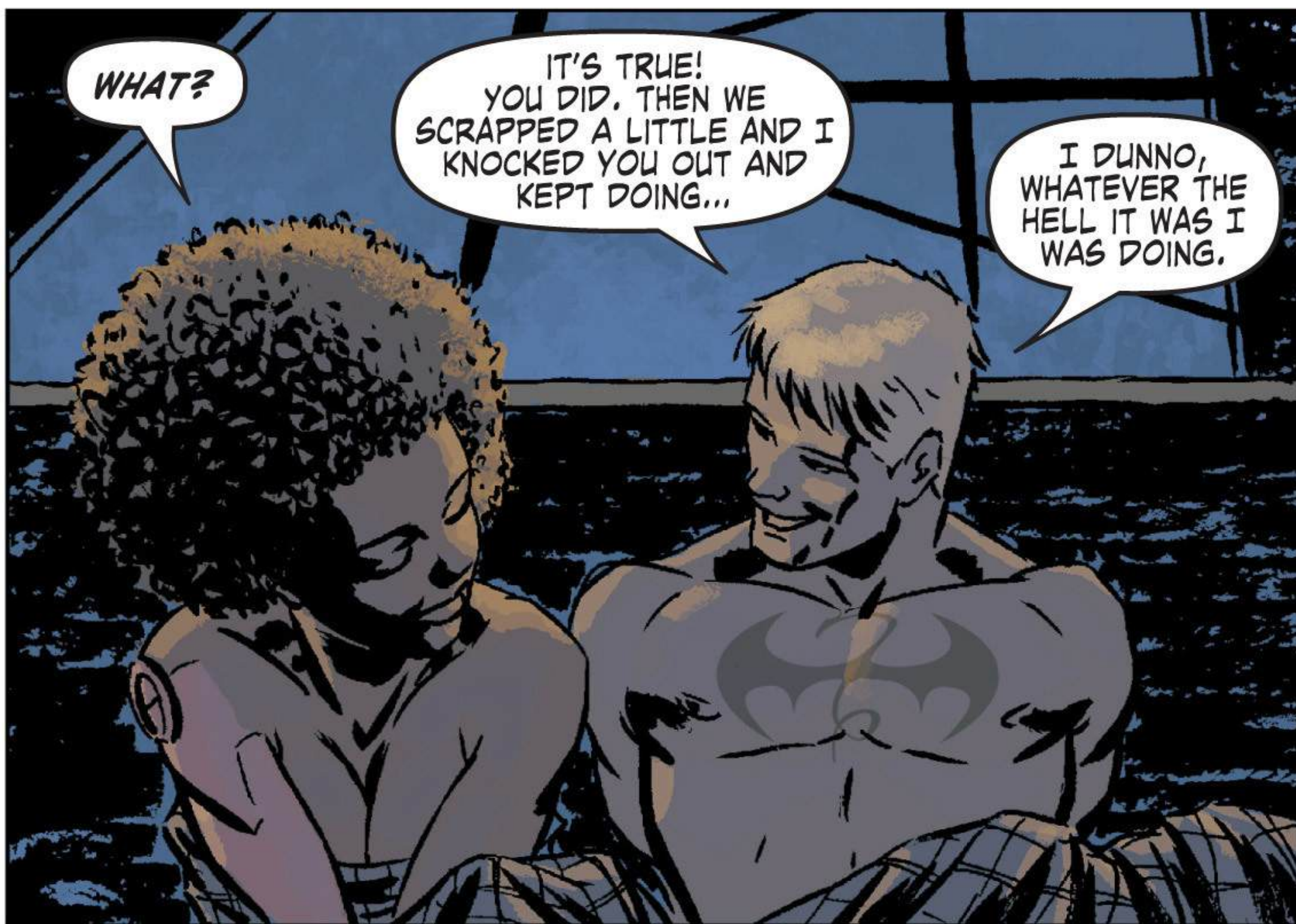
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THE FIRST WORDS I SAID TO YOU WERE?

Rand



OF COURSE I DO.

YOU SAID "OKAY, ZORRO," AND TRIED TO PUNCH ME IN THE HEAD.



WHAT?

IT'S TRUE! YOU DID. THEN WE SCRAPPED A LITTLE AND I KNOCKED YOU OUT AND KEPT DOING...

I DUNNO, WHATEVER THE HELL IT WAS I WAS DOING.



GOD, THAT WAS A CRAZY TIME.

I'LL SAY.

SEEMS LIKE IT WAS A MILLION YEARS AGO, Y'KNOW?



YEAH. EVERYTHING'S DIFFERENT NOW.

HELL, JUST LOOK AT TIMES SQUARE-- IT LOOKS LIKE *DISNEYWORLD* NOW, BUT THEN--

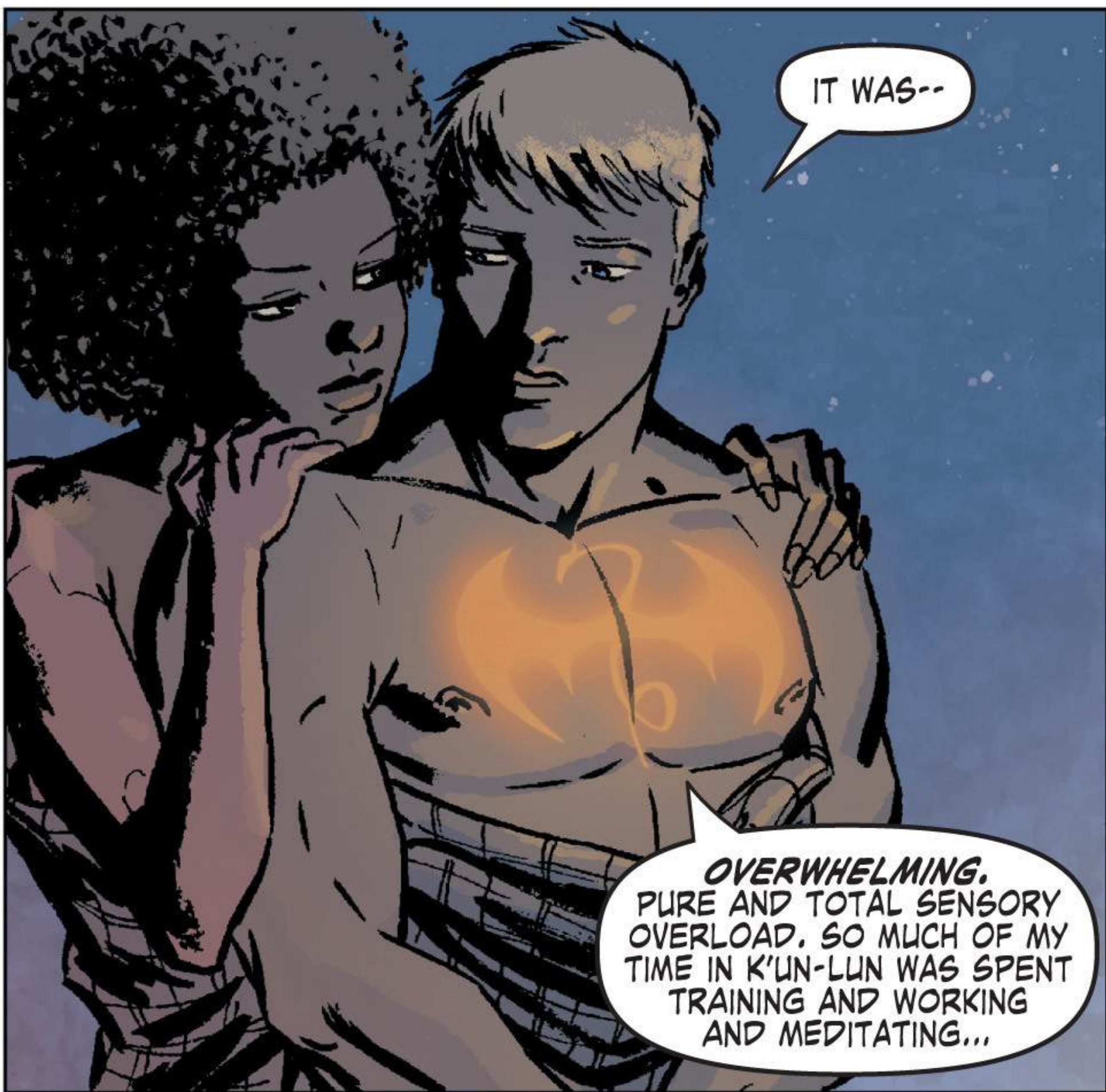


"--IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN ANOTHER PLANET."



IT MUST'VE BEEN--
COMING FROM K'UN-LUN, DID YOU--

WHAT WAS IT *LIKE* FOR YOU, BACK THEN? WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO SHOW UP IN NEW YORK CITY FROM OUT OF NOWHERE?



IT WAS--

OVERWHELMING.
PURE AND TOTAL SENSORY OVERLOAD. SO MUCH OF MY TIME IN K'UN-LUN WAS SPENT TRAINING AND WORKING AND MEDITATING...



SOMETIMES IT FELT LIKE MY MIND JUST **SHUT DOWN** TO BLOCK IT ALL OUT AND PROTECT ME.

IT'S AMAZING YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING AT ALL.



OH, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER **EVERYTHING.**

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MARVEL PREMIERE™
FEATURING



KUNG FU
ACTION--IN THE
MIGHTY MARVEL
MANNER!

IRON FIST™

YOU KARATE
KILLERS
WANTED A
SHOWDOWN--

--NOW YOU'VE
GOT IT!

AWESOME
ORIGIN
ISSUE!

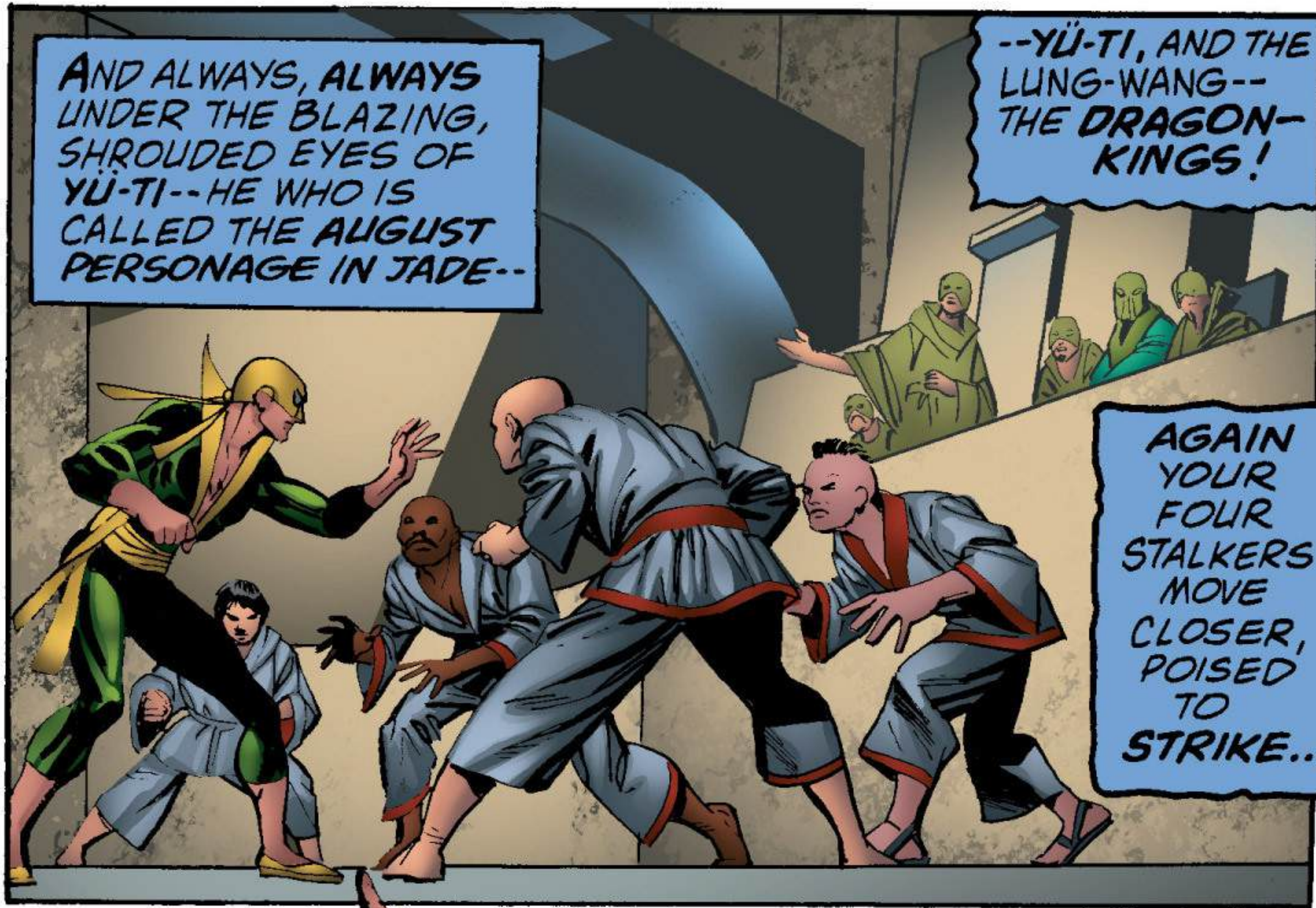


Chapter I: THE FURY OF IRON FIST!

YOU ARE IRON FIST. YOU STAND TENSELY--*TOO* TENSELY--AWARE OF THEIR EYES ON YOU: YÜ-TI, THE HOODED ONE, AND HIS FOUR DRAGON-KINGS...

AND, FACING YOU, *FOUR* OTHERS EDGE CLOSER, SEARCHING FOR AN OPENING--A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS--THE CARELESS FLICKERING OF AN EYELID.

FOR, THIS IS YOUR *DAY OF DESTINY*, IRON FIST. TODAY, YOU WILL EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE *TREE OF IMMORTALITY*--OR ELSE DRINK DEEP OF THE *ELIXIR OF DEATH*--!



AND ALWAYS, ALWAYS UNDER THE BLAZING, SHROUDED EYES OF YÜ-TI-- HE WHO IS CALLED THE AUGUST PERSONAGE IN JADE--

--YÜ-TI, AND THE LUNG-WANG-- THE DRAGON-KINGS!

AGAIN YOUR FOUR STALKERS MOVE CLOSER, POISED TO STRIKE...



YOU ASSUME THE CAT STANCE.

YOU WAIT.

YOU TAUNT:

HA!!

--AND THEY ATTACK!



THEN-- YOU MOVE!

A ROCK-SMASH BLOW FELS ONE...

...THE SWORD HAND, ANOTHER...

...WHILE A THIRD IS DROPPED BY AN ELEPHANT KICK.



YOU WHIRL:

ONE MAN, STILL DOUBLED WITH PAIN, RECEIVES THE BLOW OF THE HAMMER...

ANOTHER, ALREADY REELING, YOU DISPOSE OF WITH THE MONKEY BLOW.

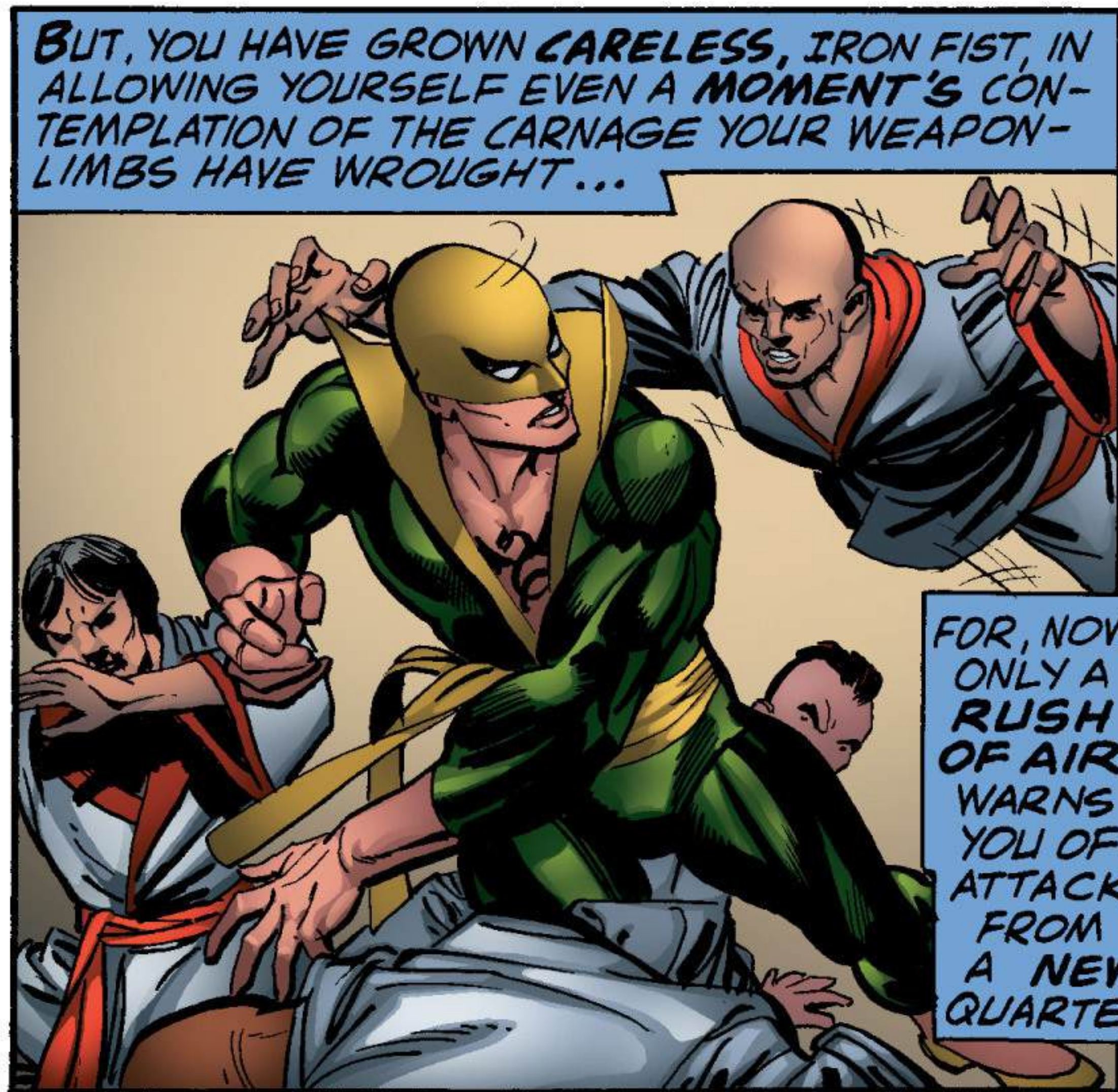
THE FOURTH ATTACKER, MORE CAUTIOUS THAN HIS FELLOWS, ONLY NOW MAKES HIS FORWARD LEAP...



STILL, HE HAS MERELY DELAYED HIS PUNISHMENT, NOT EVADED IT...

...AS A SINGLE LIGHTNING KICK GIVES HIM SORROW TO REMEMBER TILL THE END OF HIS DAYS!

BUT, YOU HAVE GROWN CARELESS, IRON FIST, IN ALLOWING YOURSELF EVEN A MOMENT'S CONTEMPLATION OF THE CARNAGE YOUR WEAPON-LIMBS HAVE WROUGHT...

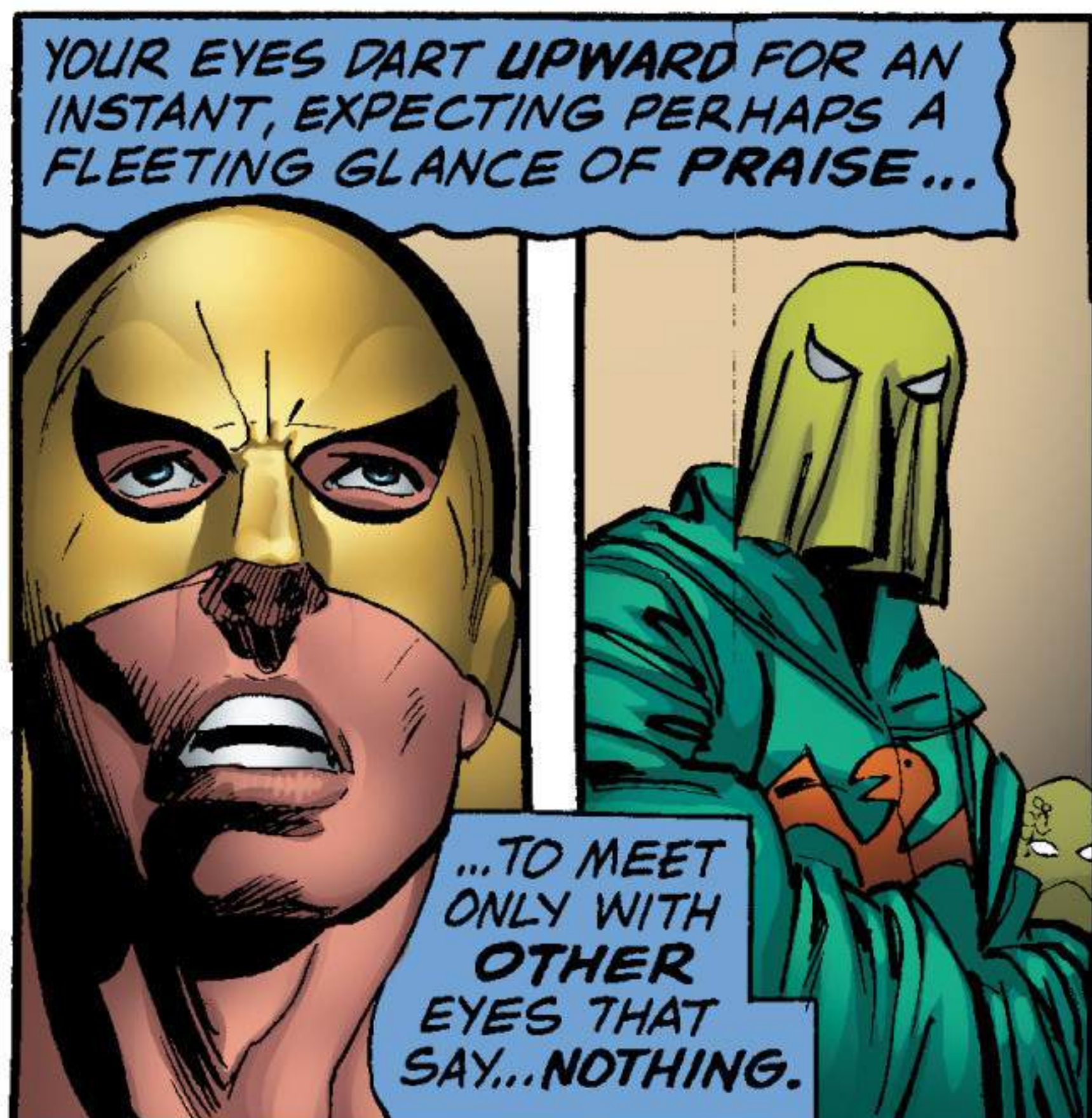


FOR, NOW, ONLY A RUSH OF AIR WARNS YOU OF ATTACK FROM A NEW QUARTER...

...AND ONLY THUNDERBOLT REFLEXES, AND A SECOND SWORD HAND BLOW, SAVE YOU FROM THE VERY FATE YOU'VE OFT DEALT OUT TO OTHERS!



YOUR EYES DART UPWARD FOR AN INSTANT, EXPECTING PERHAPS A FLEETING GLANCE OF PRAISE...



...TO MEET ONLY WITH OTHER EYES THAT SAY...NOTHING.

THUS, YOU TURN ANEW TO YOUR ATTACKERS...



...AND DIVERT THE FURY NOW BOILING WITHIN YOU...
...AGAINST THEM INSTEAD OF YU-TI.

TWO ALONE--



AT LAST, TWO ALONE ARE LEFT TO COME AT YOU.

--AND THESE, MADE RECKLESS BY RAGE-- THEIR ASSAULT BORN MORE OF DESPERATION THAN OF THE KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS THE ONE TRUE PATH.

THEY ARE, PERHAPS, GOOD MEN... HONEST MEN.

MEET THEM OUTSIDE THIS AMPHITHEATRE, AND THEY MIGHT EVEN HAVE BEEN YOUR FRIENDS.



BUT, YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO THINK OF THAT NOW...

...AS YOUR COMBINED RAM'S HEAD BLOW AND DRAGON STAMP END FOREVER THEIR DREAMS OF MARTIAL-ARTS GLORY..

...AND THEY CRUMPLE, AS ONE MAN, TO THE ARENA FLOOR...



...NOR WILL ANY ONE OF THEM SOON RISE AGAIN.

IT HAS ALL TAKEN BUT A MINUTE, PERHAPS, AS MEN MEASURE TIME-- A SINGLE MINUTE, DURING WHICH YOU MUST HAVE SEEMED AN INHUMAN FIGHTING-MACHINE.

BUT NOW, THE BEADS OF PERSPIRATION WHICH DOT THE DRAGON BRAND ON YOUR CHEST REMIND YOU THAT YOU ARE, AFTER ALL, MERELY A MAN.

PERHAPS THAT IS ENOUGH.



STANDING UPRIGHT, THOUGH BREATHING HARD, YOU ADDRESS AT LAST THE AUGUST PERSONAGE OF JADE...

O YÜ-TI--O FATHER-HEAVEN, AND LORD OF THE K'UN-LUN MOUNTAIN--I HAVE FACED THE CHALLENGE OF THE MANY, AND I HAVE PREVAILED.

I STAND READY NOW TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE ONE!

THEN STAND, MY SON... STAND AND THINK.

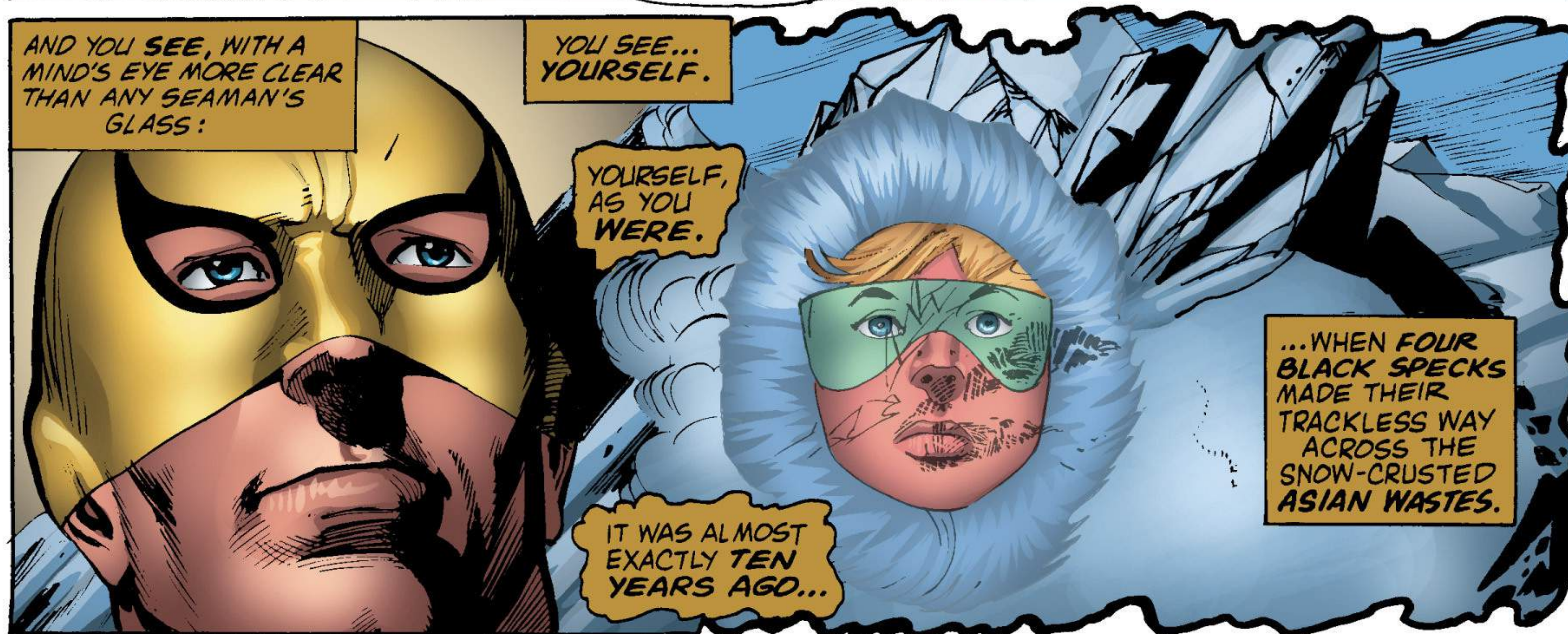
IT IS NOT MEET THAT ONE SHOULD GO, PERHAPS, TO HIS DEATH... WITHOUT FIRST A MOMENT'S CONTEMPLATION.

THINK, HOODED ONE? OF WHAT? OF WHOM?

OF YOURSELF, MY SON... AND OF THOSE THINGS WHICH HAVE BROUGHT YOU TO THIS DAYS OF DAYS...!

THINK, I SAY!

AND SO, CLOSING YOURSELF TO OUTSIDE EVENTS, YOU DO THINK...



AND YOU SEE, WITH A MIND'S EYE MORE CLEAR THAN ANY SEAMAN'S GLASS:

YOU SEE... YOURSELF.

YOURSELF, AS YOU WERE.

IT WAS ALMOST EXACTLY TEN YEARS AGO...

...WHEN FOUR BLACK SPECKS MADE THEIR TRACKLESS WAY ACROSS THE SNOW-CRUSTED ASIAN WASTES.



YOU WERE A LAD OF NINE, THEN... AND YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHY YOU WERE THERE, THOUGH YOU WERE SOON TO LEARN.

OTHERS SEEMED TO KNOW LITTLE MORE THAN YOU.

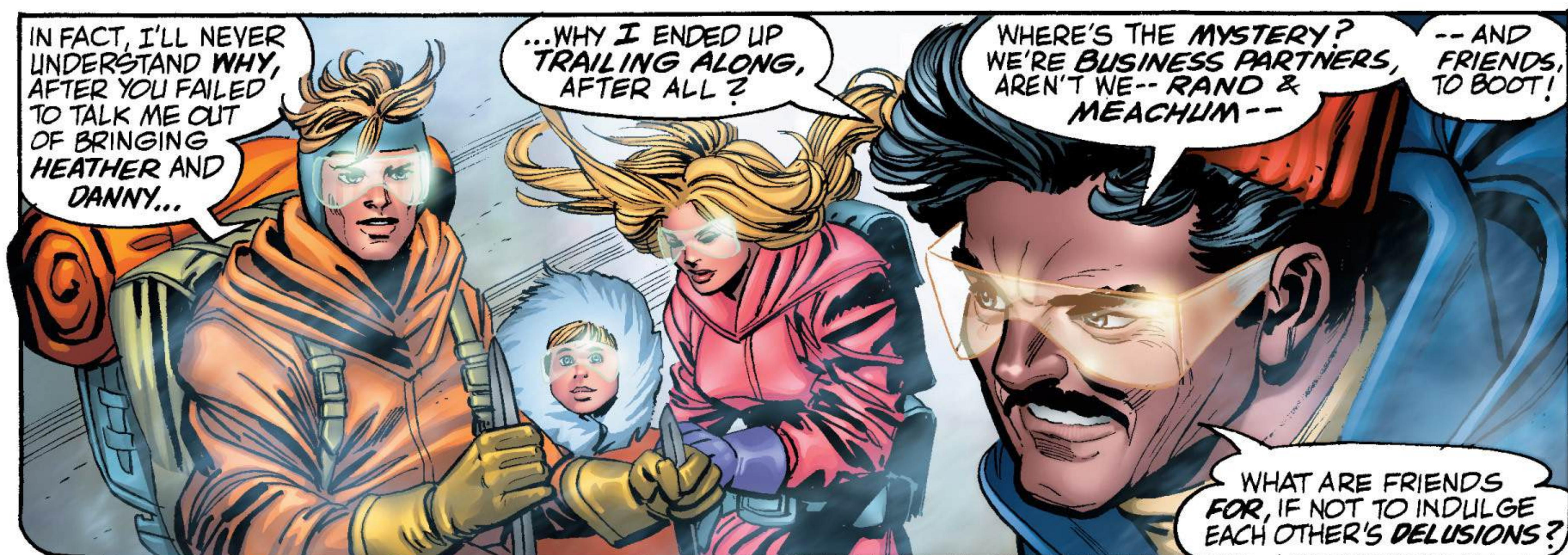
...WENDELL, IF OUR FACTORY-WORKERS COULD SEE US NOW, THEY'D THINK WE WERE ALL CRAZY!

YOU, FOR SCOURING HALF THE HIMALAYAS, IN SEARCH OF YOUR OWN MAD VERSION OF SHANGRI-LA...

...YOUR WIFE AND CHILD, FOR ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO BE DRAGGED ALONG...

...AND I, MOST OF ALL, FOR NOT STAYING IN NEW YORK, WHERE THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN TO ME MIGHT BE A STALLED LIMOUSINE IN WINTER!

PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, HAROLD...



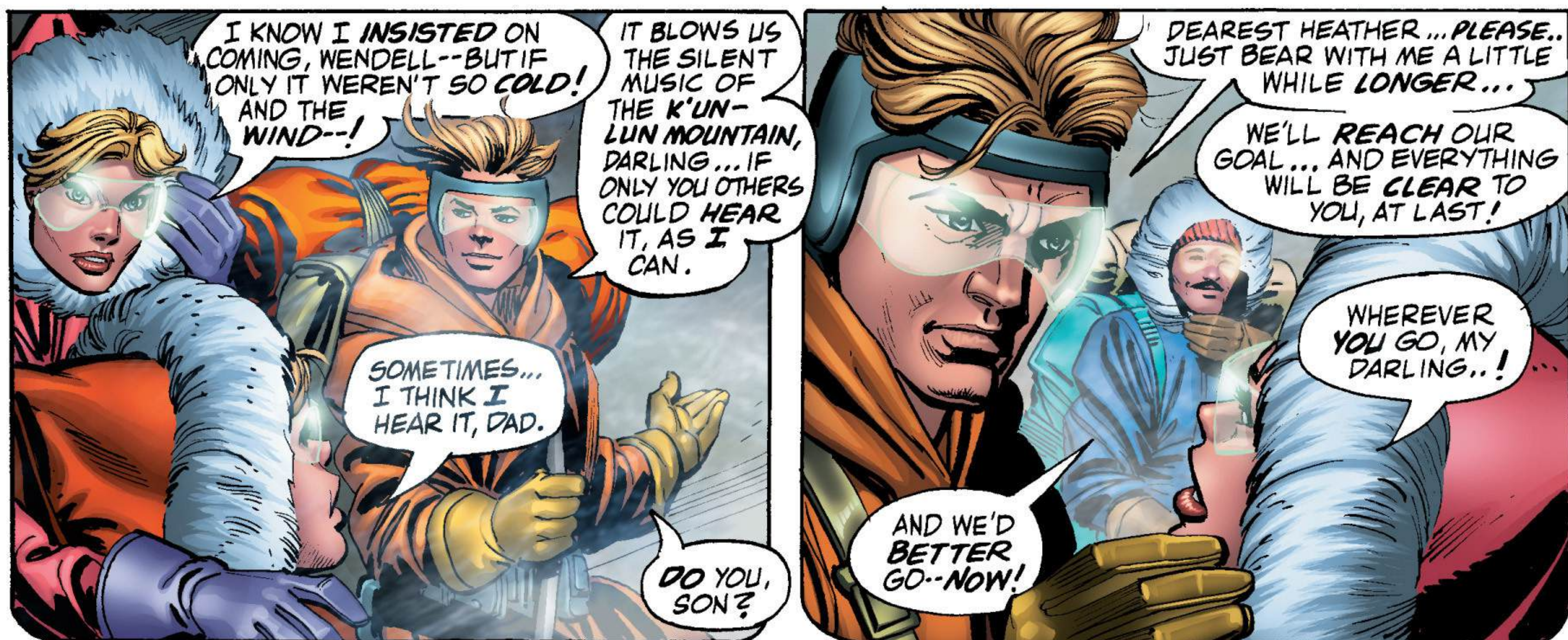
IN FACT, I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND WHY, AFTER YOU FAILED TO TALK ME OUT OF BRINGING HEATHER AND DANNY...

...WHY I ENDED UP TRAILING ALONG, AFTER ALL?

WHERE'S THE MYSTERY? WE'RE BUSINESS PARTNERS, AREN'T WE-- RAND & MEACHUM--

-- AND FRIENDS, TO BOOT!

WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR, IF NOT TO INDULGE EACH OTHER'S DELUSIONS?



I KNOW I INSISTED ON COMING, WENDELL--BUT IF ONLY IT WEREN'T SO COLD! AND THE WIND--!

IT BLOWS US THE SILENT MUSIC OF THE K'UN-LUN MOUNTAIN, DARLING... IF ONLY YOU OTHERS COULD HEAR IT, AS I CAN.

SOMETIMES... I THINK I HEAR IT, DAD.

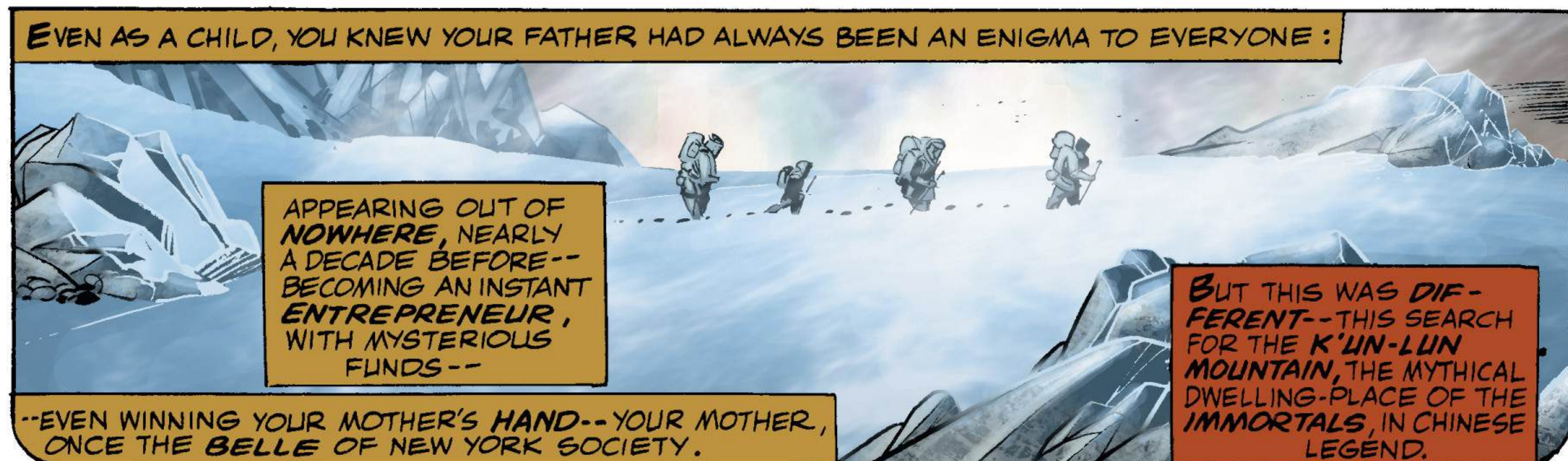
DO YOU, SON?

DEAREST HEATHER... PLEASE.. JUST BEAR WITH ME A LITTLE WHILE LONGER...

WE'LL REACH OUR GOAL... AND EVERYTHING WILL BE CLEAR TO YOU, AT LAST!

WHEREVER YOU GO, MY DARLING..!

AND WE'D BETTER GO--NOW!

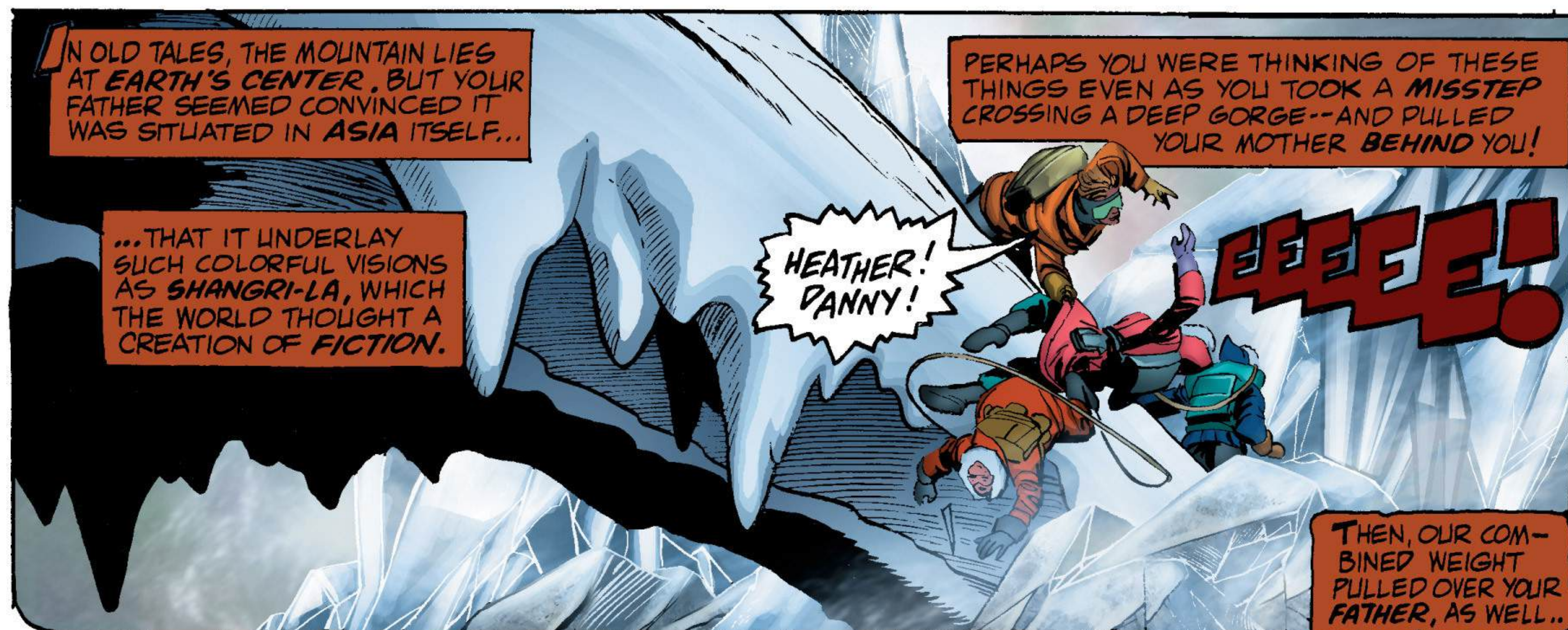


EVEN AS A CHILD, YOU KNEW YOUR FATHER HAD ALWAYS BEEN AN ENIGMA TO EVERYONE :

APPEARING OUT OF NOWHERE, NEARLY A DECADE BEFORE-- BECOMING AN INSTANT ENTREPRENEUR, WITH MYSTERIOUS FUNDS--

--EVEN WINNING YOUR MOTHER'S HAND--YOUR MOTHER, ONCE THE BELLE OF NEW YORK SOCIETY.

BUT THIS WAS DIFFERENT--THIS SEARCH FOR THE K'UN-LUN MOUNTAIN, THE MYTHICAL DWELLING-PLACE OF THE IMMORTALS, IN CHINESE LEGEND.



IN OLD TALES, THE MOUNTAIN LIES AT EARTH'S CENTER. BUT YOUR FATHER SEEMED CONVINCED IT WAS SITUATED IN ASIA ITSELF...

...THAT IT UNDERLAY SUCH COLORFUL VISIONS AS SHANGRI-LA, WHICH THE WORLD THOUGHT A CREATION OF FICTION.

PERHAPS YOU WERE THINKING OF THESE THINGS EVEN AS YOU TOOK A MISSTEP CROSSING A DEEP GORGE--AND PULLED YOUR MOTHER BEHIND YOU!

HEATHER! PANNY!

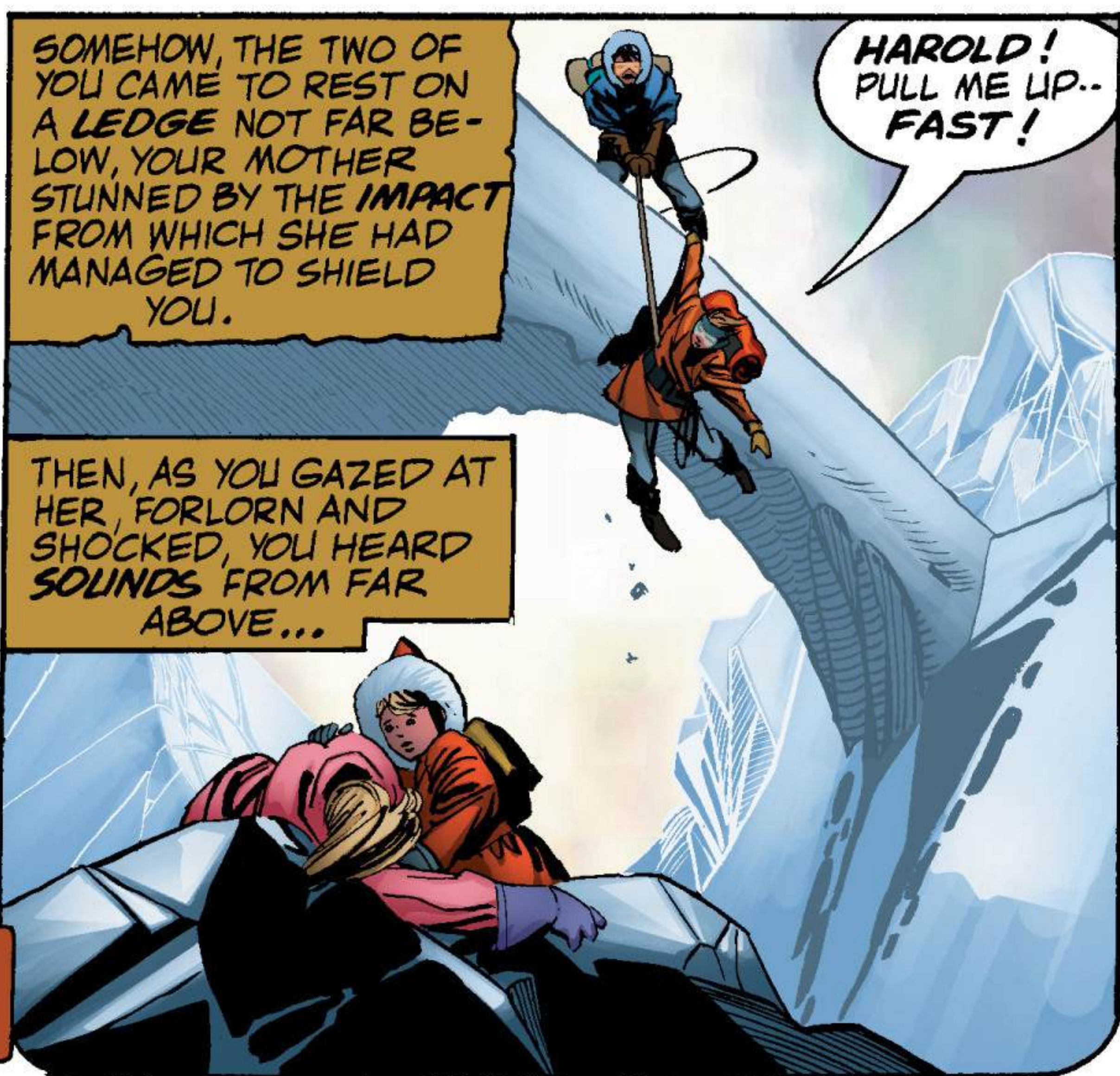
EEEE!

THEN, OUR COMBINED WEIGHT PULLED OVER YOUR FATHER, AS WELL..



THE NEXT MOMENT, THE ROPE THAT HELD THE THREE OF YOU TOGETHER **SNAPPED**-- LEAVING YOUR FATHER DANGLING PRE-CARIOUSLY FROM THE **NATURAL BRIDGE**--

--AND YOU AND YOUR MOTHER ROLLING OVER AND OVER AGAIN, DOWN THE SNOW-PACKED **MOUNTAIN SIDE**.



SOMEHOW, THE TWO OF YOU CAME TO REST ON A **LEDGE** NOT FAR BELOW, YOUR MOTHER STUNNED BY THE **IMPACT** FROM WHICH SHE HAD MANAGED TO SHIELD YOU.

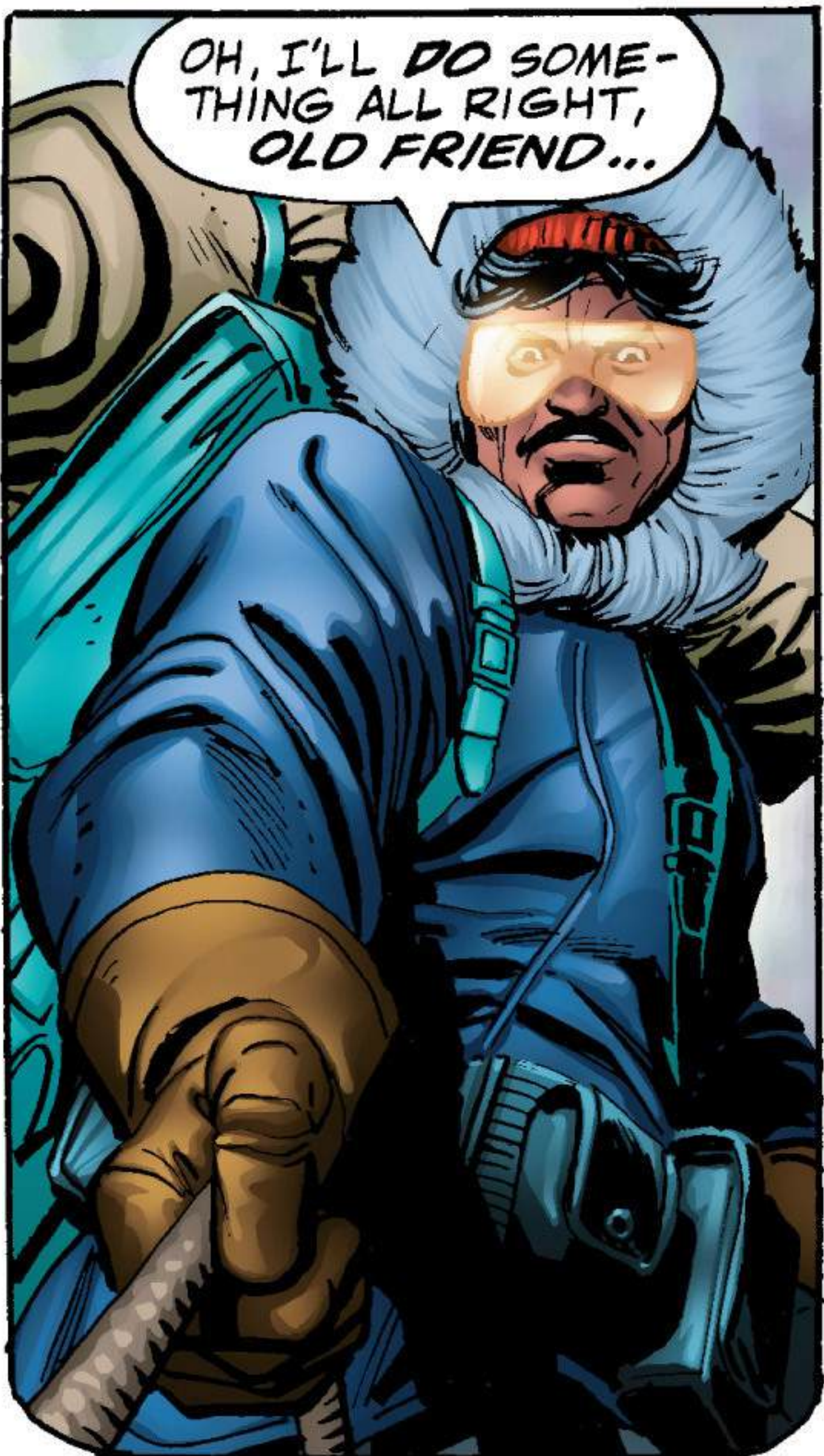
THEN, AS YOU GAZED AT HER, FORLORN AND SHOCKED, YOU HEARD **SOUNDS** FROM FAR ABOVE...

HAROLD!
PULL ME UP--
FAST!



WE'VE GOT TO GET-- **ANOTHER ROPE!** THROW IT TO HEATHER-- AND DANNY!

WH-WHY ARE YOU **STARING** AT ME THAT WAY, MAN? FOR GOD'S SAKE-- **DO SOMETHING!!**



OH, I'LL **DO SOMETHING** ALL RIGHT, **OLD FRIEND...**



...BUT I **DON'T** THINK YOU'RE GOING TO **LIKE** IT!



YOUR FATHER WAS A **STRONG** MAN... STRONG IN BODY, STRONG OF **WILL**.

IT TOOK **LONG SECONDS** FOR THE CRUSHING PRESSURE OF HAROLD MEACHUM'S BOOT TO **LOOSEN** HIS GRIP ON THE ICE-COLD **ROCK**.



BUT, AT LAST, YOUR FATHER **FELL**.

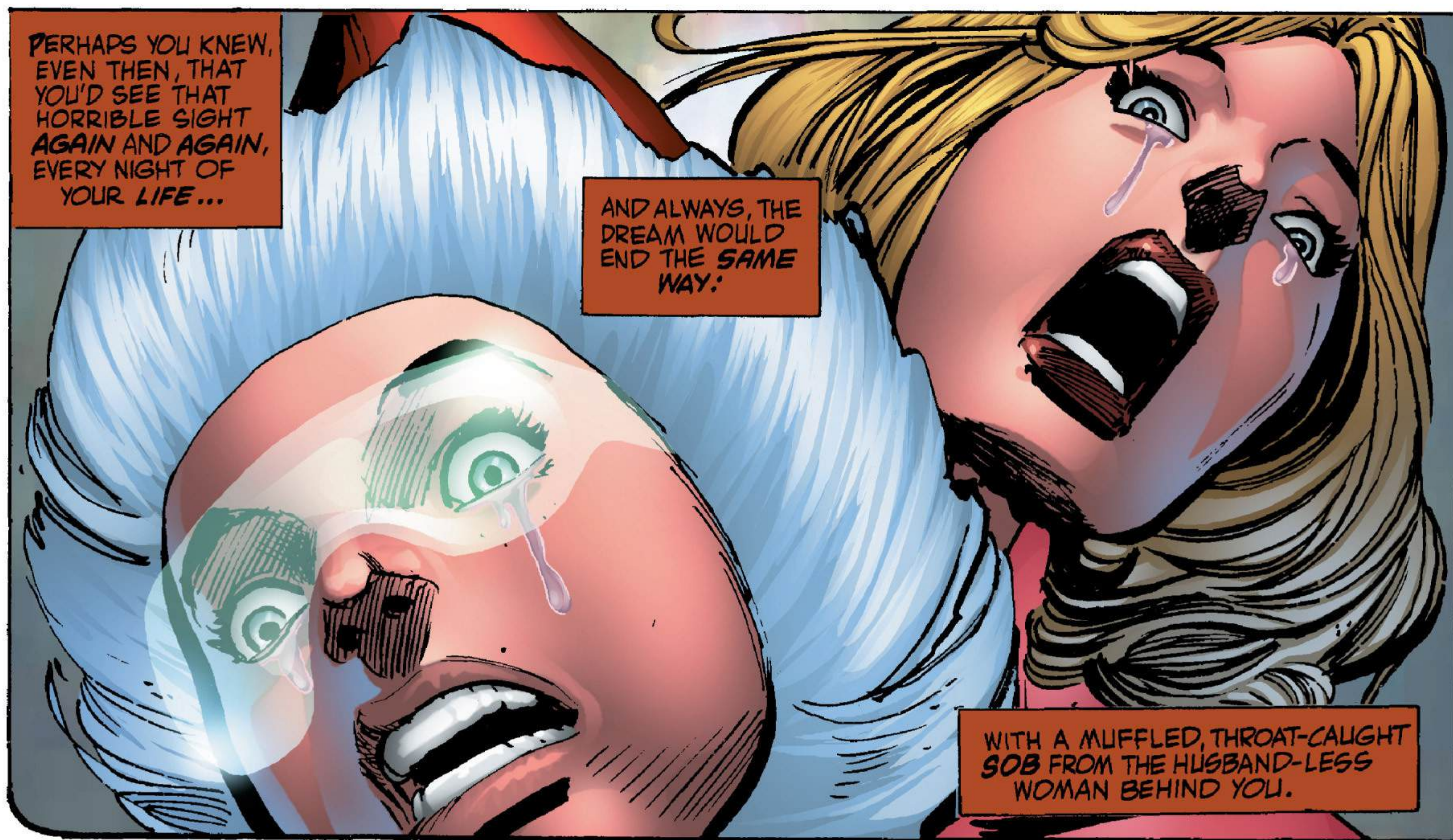
WENDELL!
OH MY GOD--
WENDELL!!

A full-page comic book illustration showing Iron Fist in a snowy, mountainous environment. He is wearing his signature orange jumpsuit and black tactical vest. He is in a dynamic, mid-air pose, with his right leg extended upwards and his left leg bent. His right arm is extended forward, and his left arm is bent. He is wearing his signature black mask with a white 'F' on the forehead. The background is a vast, icy landscape with jagged rock formations and snow-covered peaks. The sky is a pale blue. The overall tone is dramatic and action-oriented.

YOU REMEMBER IT
CLEARLY, DON'T
YOU, IRON FIST?

YOUR FATHER
FELL FOR A
LONG TIME...

...AND THE *LAST* YOU COULD SEE OF HIM
WAS A VIEW OF SOMETHING VERY LIKE A
BROKEN DOLL, CAROMING LUDICROUSLY
FROM AN OUTCROPPING OF JAGGED ROCK.



PERHAPS YOU KNEW,
EVEN THEN, THAT
YOU'D SEE THAT
HORRIBLE SIGHT
AGAIN AND AGAIN,
EVERY NIGHT OF
YOUR LIFE...

AND ALWAYS, THE
DREAM WOULD
END THE SAME
WAY:

WITH A MUFFLED, THROAT-CAUGHT
SOB FROM THE HUSBAND-LESS
WOMAN BEHIND YOU.



THEN, A VOICE INTRUDED ONCE MORE
UPON YOUR OWN PRIVATE HELL ...

AND YOU WONDERED WHY I
ACCOMPANIED YOU, WENDELL RAND?

WELL, NOW
THERE IS NO
MORE MEACHUM
& RAND-- ONLY
RAND, INC.--

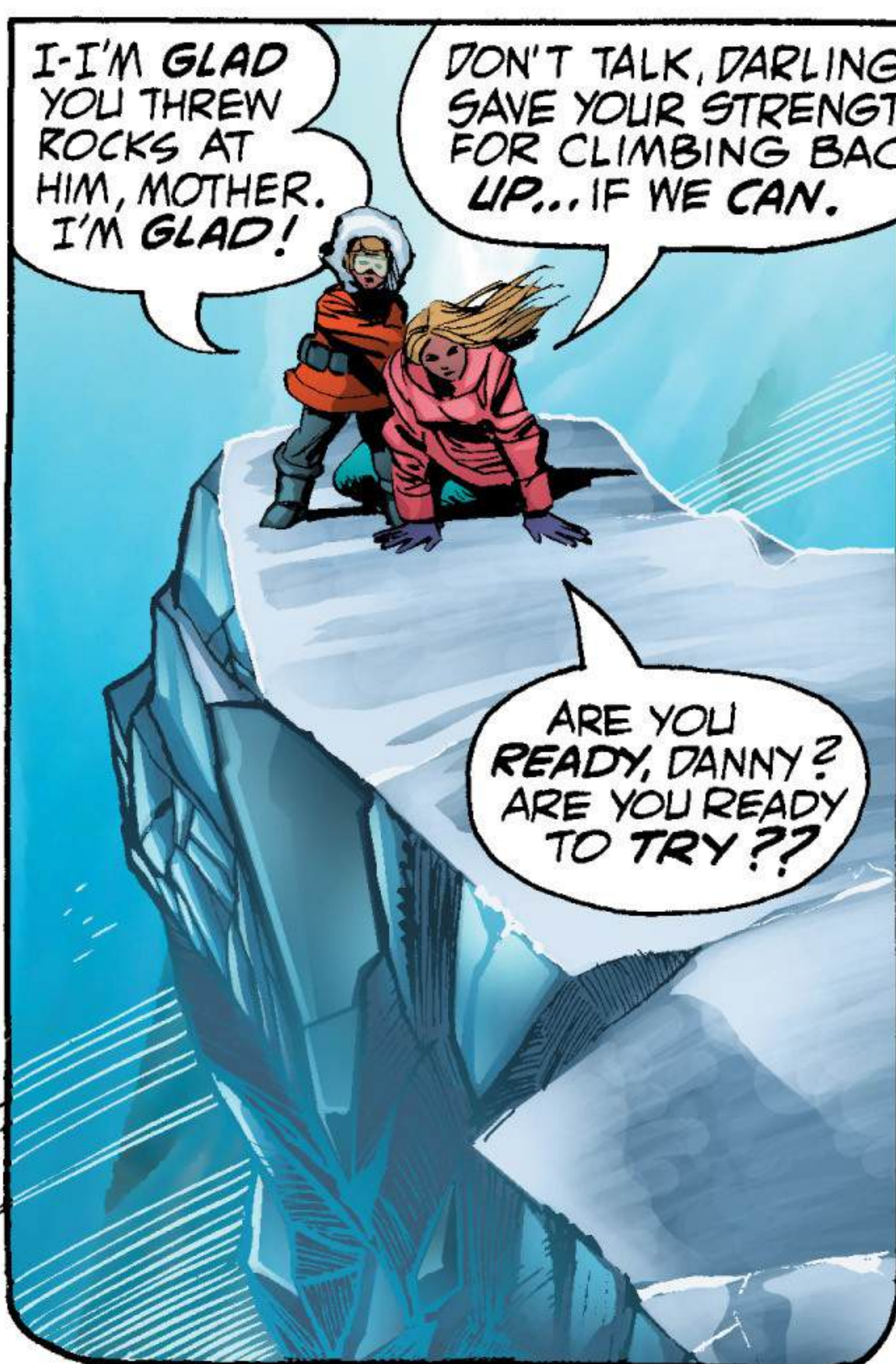
-- AND NO ONE
WILL EVER BE ABLE
TO PROVE I KILLED
YOU!



EXHILARATION WAS SWEEPING OVER HAROLD
MEACHUM ... EXHILARATION, AND A SENSE OF
POWER...

-- WHEN THE FIRST
ROCK STRUCK
AND BLOODIED
HIS CHEEK.

PERHAPS THAT IS
WHY HE LOOKED
MORE SHOCKED
THAN TRULY HURT--





THAT IS **GOOD**. FOR, TO BECOME **ONE** OF US--TO EAT OF THE **TREE OF IMMORTALITY**, AND THUS TO GAIN **ETERNAL LIFE** HERE IN K'UN-LUN YOU FIRST MUST MEET--

--THE **CHALLENGE OF THE ONE!**

I HAVE FELLED **MANY** MEN WITH EASE, O YU-TI.

SHALL I FLINCH AT **ONE**?



BE CERTAIN, MY SON, THAT SUCH FALSE BRAVADO IS NOT THE VOICE OF A **DEMON** AT YOUR EAR...



FOR, ONE MAY PERHAPS **BE** MANY... AYE, AND **MORE** THAN MANY...



...WHEN THAT ONE IS **SHU-HU!**

HE WHOSE LIPS ARE PLEDGED TO **SILENCE**, AND WHOSE NAME MEANS THE **LIGHTNING...**

...AND WHOSE **FISTS** ARE LIKE TWIN **THUNDER-BOLTS!**

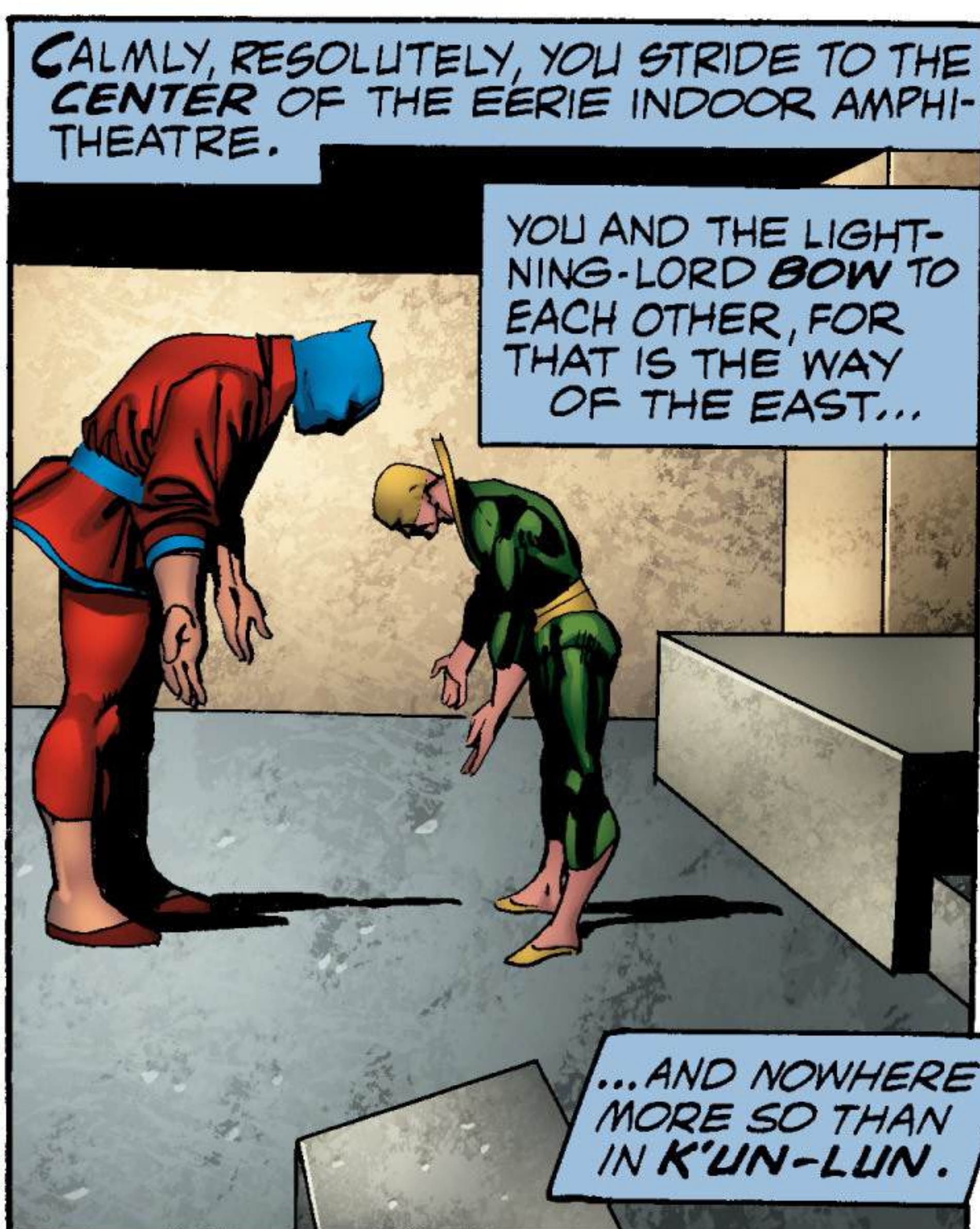


WELL, MY SON? WILL YOU **FACE** SHU-HU...

OR SHALL MY **DRAGON-KINGS** AND I DELAY THIS CHALLENGE UNTIL **ANOTHER** DAY, WHEN YOU ARE **RESTED**?

NO, AUGUST ONE. MY TRIAL BY COMBAT **MUST** BE TODAY. I WILL **NOT** DELAY IT.

THEN **PROCEED**. LET IT BE AS IT IS **WRITTEN**.



CALMLY, RESOLUTELY, YOU STRIDE TO THE **CENTER** OF THE EERIE INDOOR AMPHITHEATRE.

YOU AND THE **LIGHTNING-LORD** **BOW** TO EACH OTHER, FOR THAT IS THE WAY OF THE EAST...

...AND NOWHERE MORE SO THAN IN K'UN-LUN.

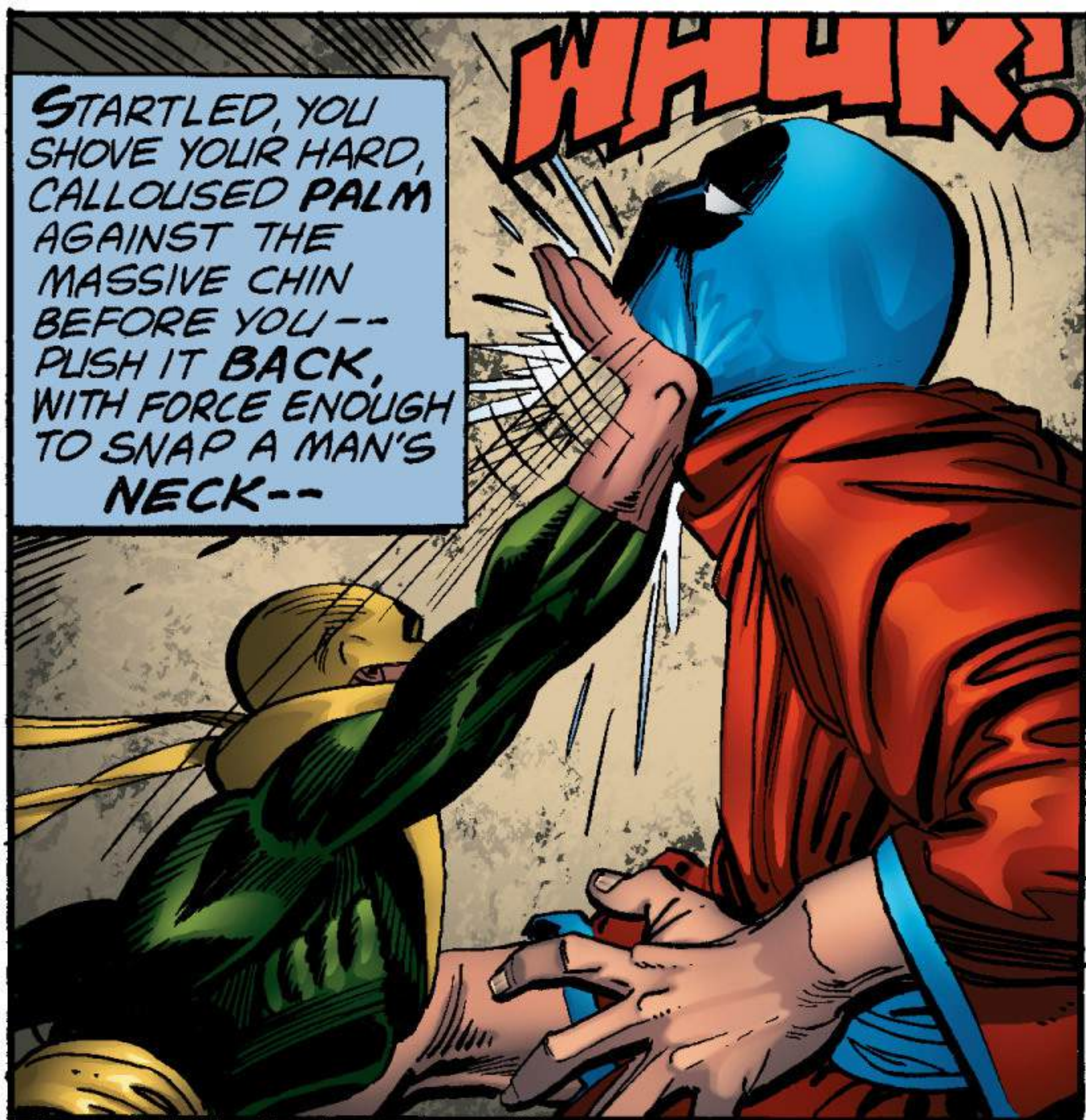


THEN--THE **BATTLE!**

SHU-HU IS **SWIFT**--NEARLY AS SWIFT AS THE **THUNDERCLAPS** FOR WHICH HE IS NAMED.

YET, YOU WHO ONCE WERE DANNY RAND **EVADE** HIS MAMMOTH FIST, AND STRIKE HOME A **SOLID BODY BLOW...**

--TO **NO EFFECT!**



STARTLED, YOU SHOVE YOUR HARD, CALLOUSED PALM AGAINST THE MASSIVE CHIN BEFORE YOU -- PUSH IT BACK, WITH FORCE ENOUGH TO SNAP A MAN'S NECK--



--AND, THE NEXT INSTANT, ARE NEARLY SHATTERED FOR YOUR PAINS!...



ALMOST UN-BELIEVING NOW, YOU SEEK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SLOW PONDEROUSNESS OF THE HOODED MAN'S VAST BULK.

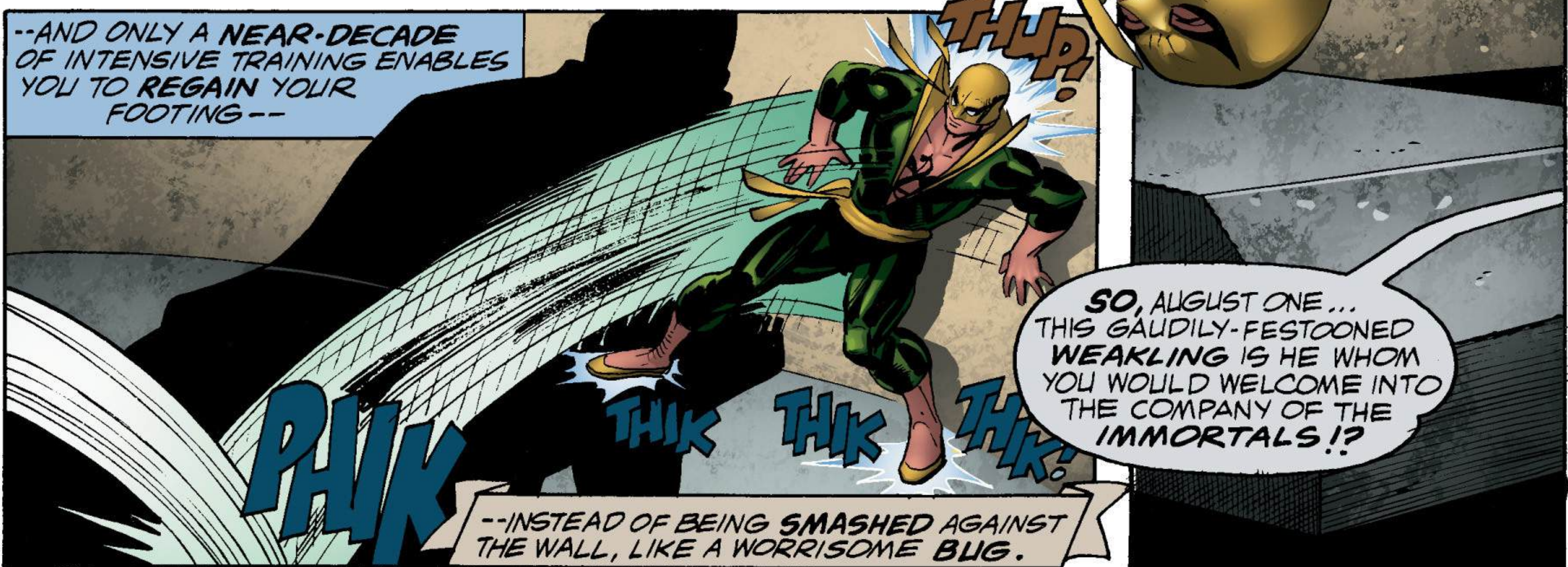
HAI-YA!

YOUR NIMBLE FEET FIND THEIR TARGET, SURELY ENOUGH--



BUT, ONCE MORE, SHU-HU SEEMS SCARCELY SHAKEN BY THE IMPACT--

--HIS OWN CLENCHED FISTS ARE FAR FROM SLOW --



--AND ONLY A NEAR-DECADE OF INTENSIVE TRAINING ENABLES YOU TO REGAIN YOUR FOOTING --

SO, AUGUST ONE ... THIS GAUDILY-FESTOONED WEAKLING IS HE WHOM YOU WOULD WELCOME INTO THE COMPANY OF THE IMMORTALS!?

--INSTEAD OF BEING SMASHED AGAINST THE WALL, LIKE A WORRISOME BUG.



RATHER, IT SEEMS TO **THIS** ONE THAT HE SHOULD BE TURNED OUT AGAIN INTO THE **END-LESS SNOWS** THAT DRIFT BEYOND THE **GATE OF DREAMS**.

THE **AUGUST** PERSONAGE OF **JADE** SAYS **NOTHING**.

AND, IF THE **BROW** BEHIND HIS **SOMBRE** HOOD IS **FURROWED**, NOT EVEN THE **FOUR** **DRAGON-KINGS** STAND CLOSE ENOUGH TO **SEE**.



MEANWHILE, WITH **SURPRISING QUICKNESS**, THE **GIANT** HURLS HIMSELF **BODILY** TOWARD YOU.

WITH AN **AGILE LEAP**, YOU **DODGE** FEET WHOSE **SHEER MASS** COULD CRUSH A **TIGER'S SKULL...**



...ONLY TO BE **FELLED** IN TURN BY A **FAST-DARTING FIST**.



AGAIN, AND YET AGAIN, THOSE **MASSIVE HANDS** **PUMMEL** YOU...

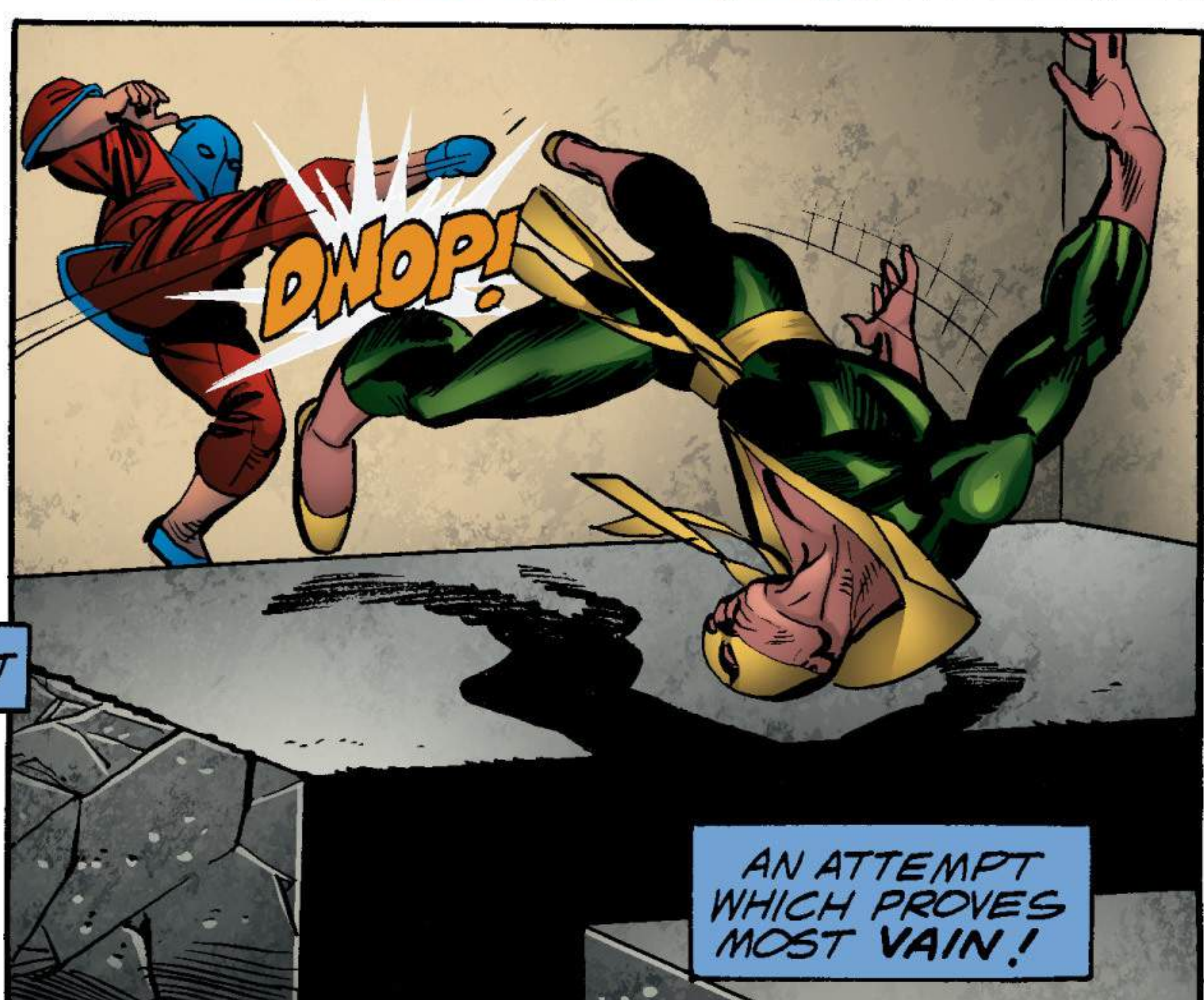
...TEACH YOU WHAT THE **AFTERLIFE** MUST BE LIKE, BEYOND **K'U-CH'U-CH'IAO**, THE **BRIDGE OF PAIN**, BENEATH WHICH FLOW **RIVERS OF CRIMSON**.



THAP!

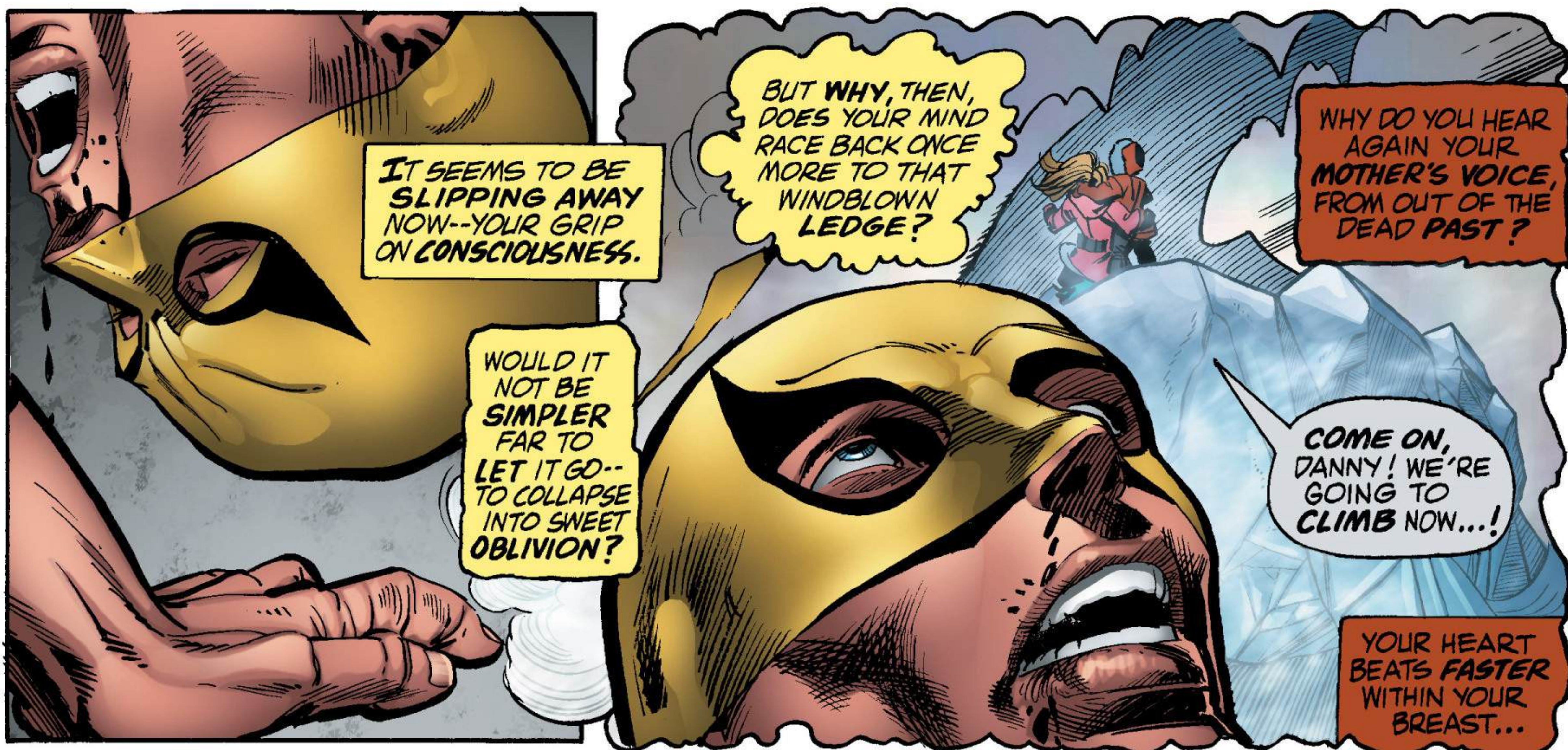
--FROM WHICH YOU **RICOCHET**, IN TURN--

--IN AN **ATTEMPT** TO GAIN A **MOMENT'S RESPITE**.



DNOP!

AN **ATTEMPT** WHICH PROVES **MOST VAIN!**



IT SEEMS TO BE
SLIPPING AWAY
NOW--YOUR GRIP
ON CONSCIOUSNESS.

BUT WHY, THEN,
DOES YOUR MIND
RACE BACK ONCE
MORE TO THAT
WINDBLOWN
LEDGE?

WHY DO YOU HEAR
AGAIN YOUR
MOTHER'S VOICE,
FROM OUT OF THE
DEAD PAST?

WOULD IT
NOT BE
SIMPLER
FAR TO
LET IT GO--
TO COLLAPSE
INTO SWEET
OBLIVION?

COME ON,
DANNY! WE'RE
GOING TO
CLIMB NOW...!

YOUR HEART
BEATS **FASTER**
WITHIN YOUR
BREAST...



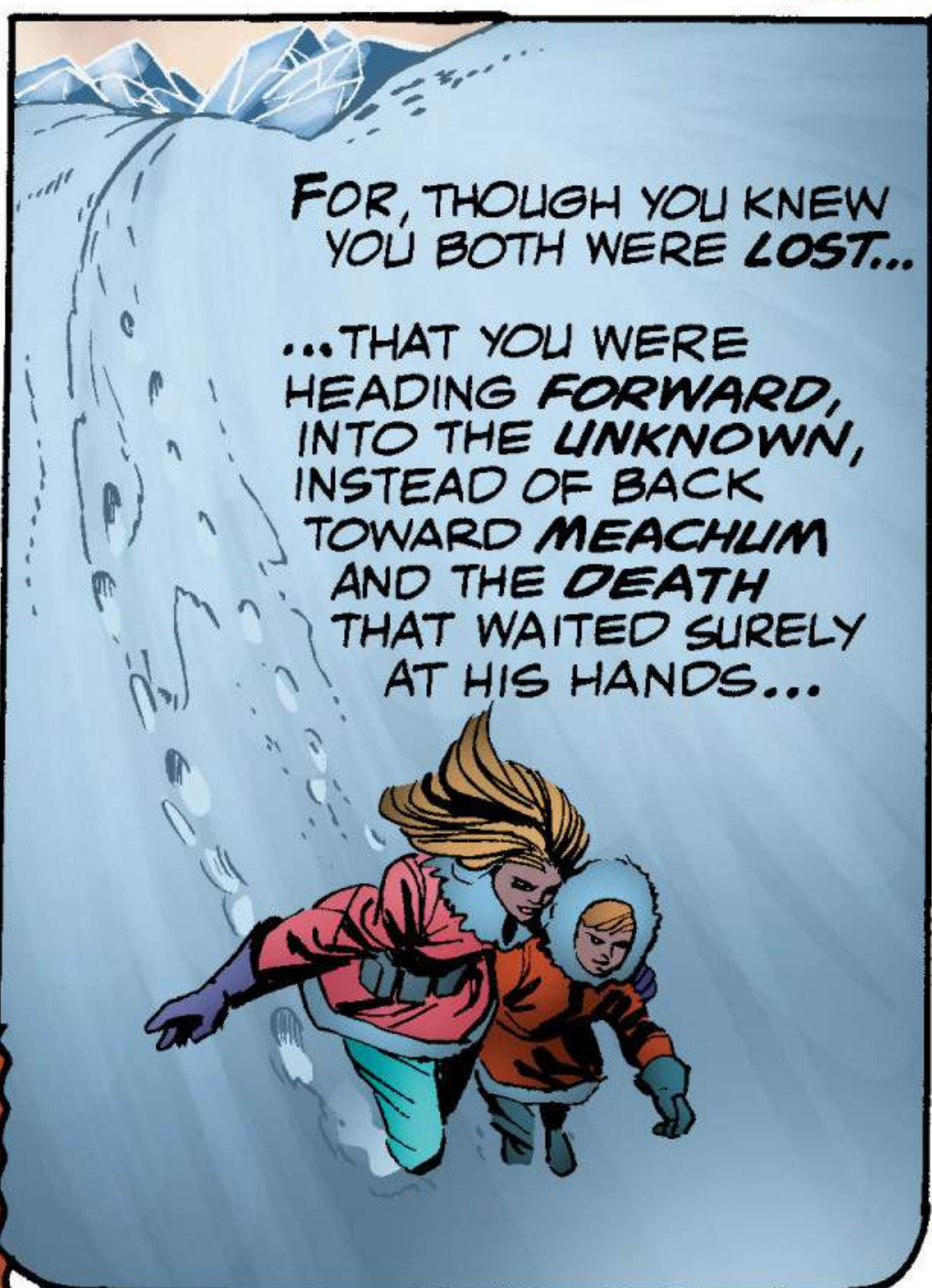
BUT, IS IT **HERE** THAT IT BEATS...
HERE, WITHIN THE ARENA
OF YOUR THROBBING PAIN...

...OR IS IT **THERE**,
WHERE TWO PEOPLE
MADE THAT MOST
INHUMAN EFFORT,
TEN YEARS GONE?



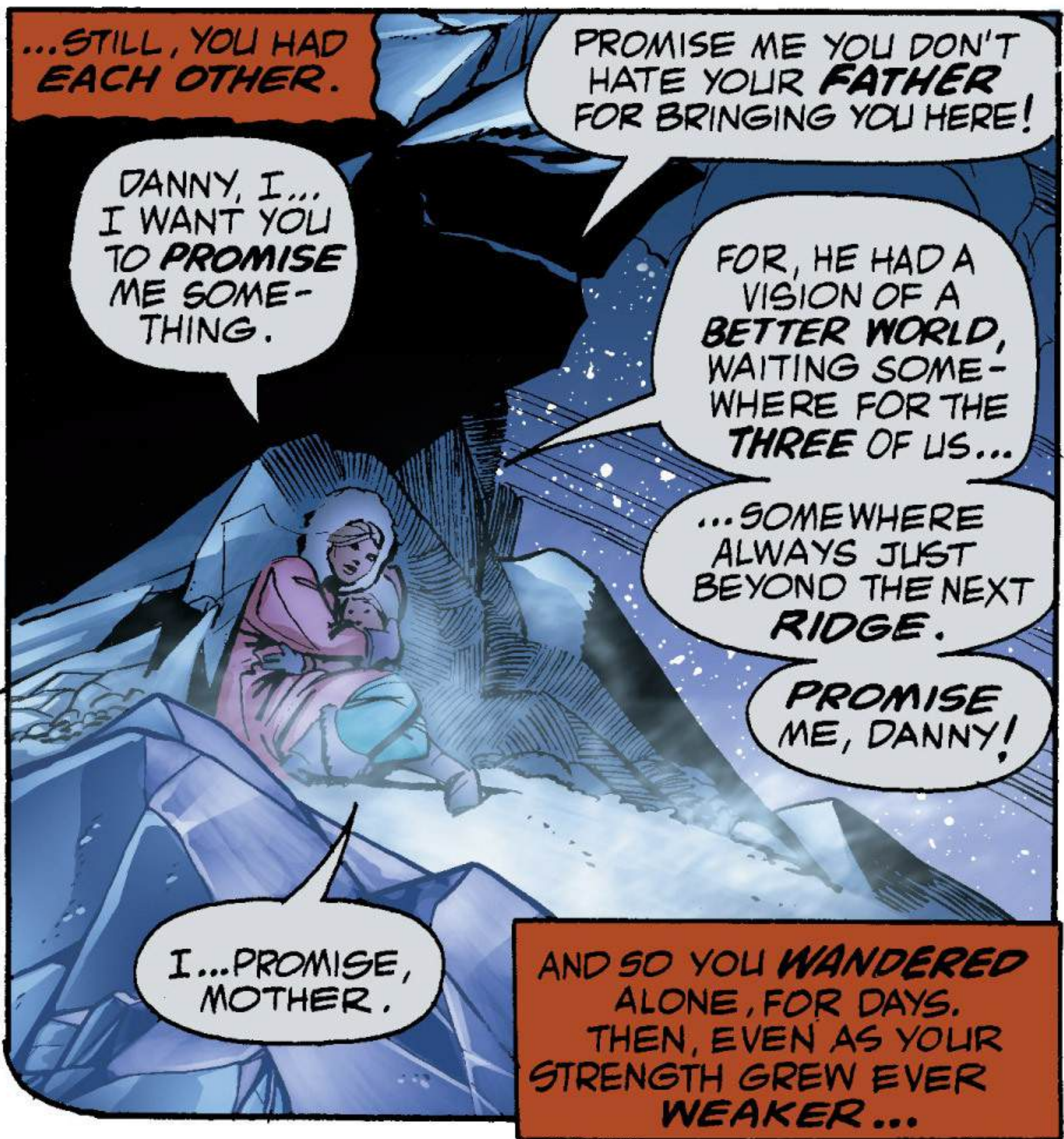
YOU MADE IT **THEN**,
DIDN'T YOU?

SOMEHOW, IT WAS **EASIER**
THEN, IN SPITE OF THE
NUMBING **COLD**... IN SPITE
OF THE VIVID MEMORY OF
MURDER MOST FOUL!



FOR, THOUGH YOU KNEW
YOU BOTH WERE **LOST**...

...THAT YOU WERE
HEADING **FORWARD**,
INTO THE **UNKNOWN**,
INSTEAD OF BACK
TOWARD **MEACHUM**
AND THE **DEATH**
THAT WAITED SURELY
AT HIS HANDS...



...STILL, YOU HAD
EACH OTHER.

DANNY, I...
I WANT YOU
TO **PROMISE**
ME SOME-
THING.

PROMISE ME YOU DON'T
HATE YOUR **FATHER**
FOR BRINGING YOU HERE!

FOR, HE HAD A
VISION OF A
BETTER WORLD,
WAITING SOME-
WHERE FOR THE
THREE OF US...

...SOMEWHERE
ALWAYS JUST
BEYOND THE NEXT
RIDGE.

PROMISE
ME, DANNY!

I...PROMISE,
MOTHER.

AND SO YOU **WANDERED**
ALONE, FOR DAYS.
THEN, EVEN AS YOUR
STRENGTH GREW EVER
WEAKER...



...YOUR STEPS
EVER MORE
FALTERING...

...SUDDENLY,
YOU BOTH WEREN'T
ALONE ANY
LONGER.



THE WOLVES MUST HAVE TRAILED YOU BOTH FOR HOURS, IN PATIENT, SINISTER SILENCE,

BUT NOW, THEY BEGAN TO RUN... AS IF SENSING SOMEHOW THAT THEY HAD LITTLE TIME LEFT...



MOTHER... WHAT KIND OF PLACE WAS FATHER LOOKING FOR? I... I NEVER KNEW...

IT WAS A DREAM PLACE, DANNY. IT NEVER REALLY EXISTED, EXCEPT IN HIS OWN MIND...

...ALTHOUGH ONCE... JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE... I THOUGHT THAT PERHAPS IT DID.



IT WAS THE VERY NEXT SECOND THAT SHE SAW IT...

NO! IT-- IT CAN'T BE--!



A BRIDGE! OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE!

THAT PLACE DOESN'T EXIST! IT COULDN'T!

COULD IT BE THE ONE THAT LEADS TO--NO! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

IT'S...JUST A BRIDGE... NOTHING MORE.

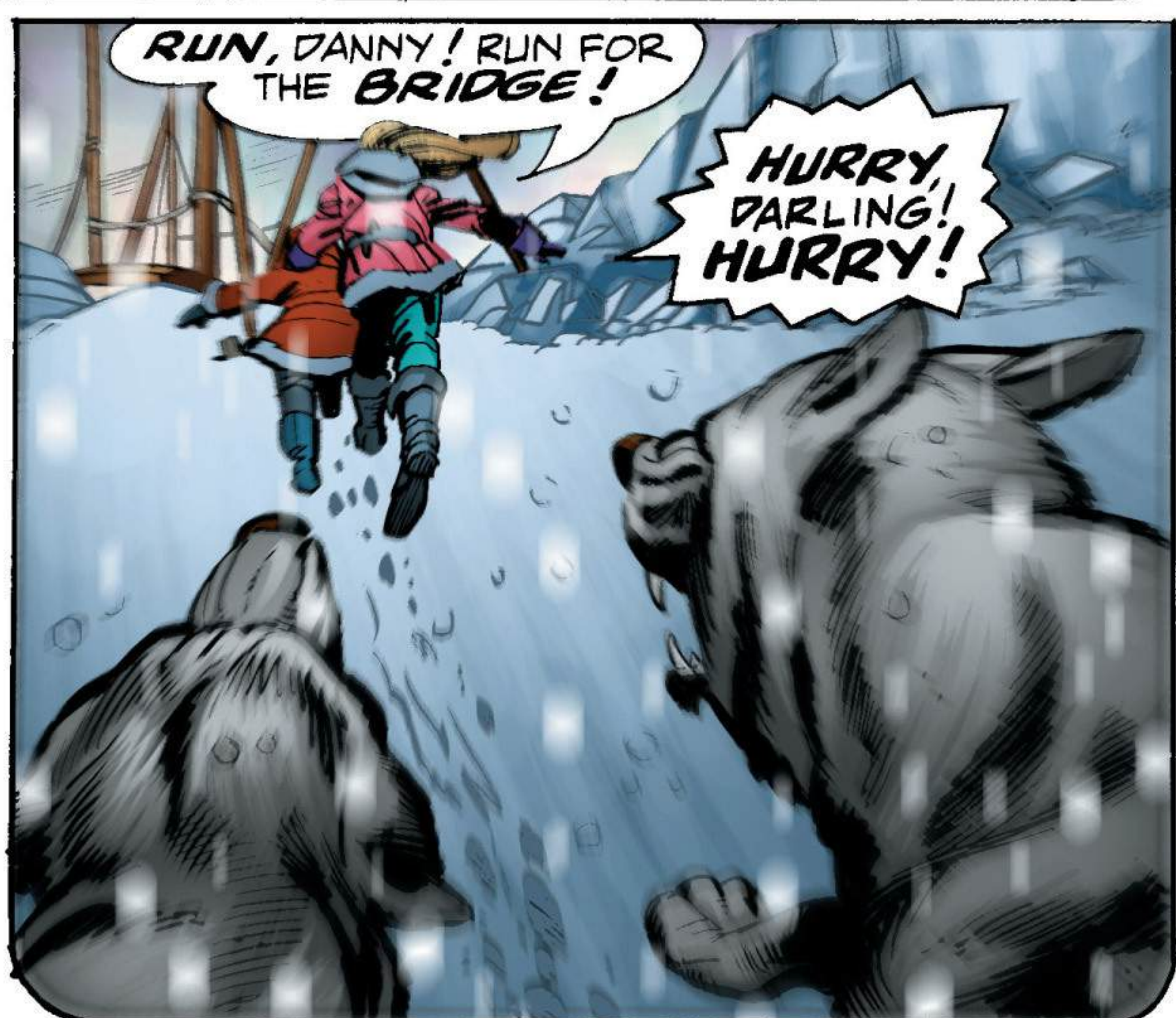
IT WAS THEN, YOU REMEMBER, THAT THE HOWLING BEGAN...



...THE HOWLING THAT WAS SCARCELY MORE HORRIFYING THAN THE SUDDEN, TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY HAD BEEN THERE, ALL ALONG.

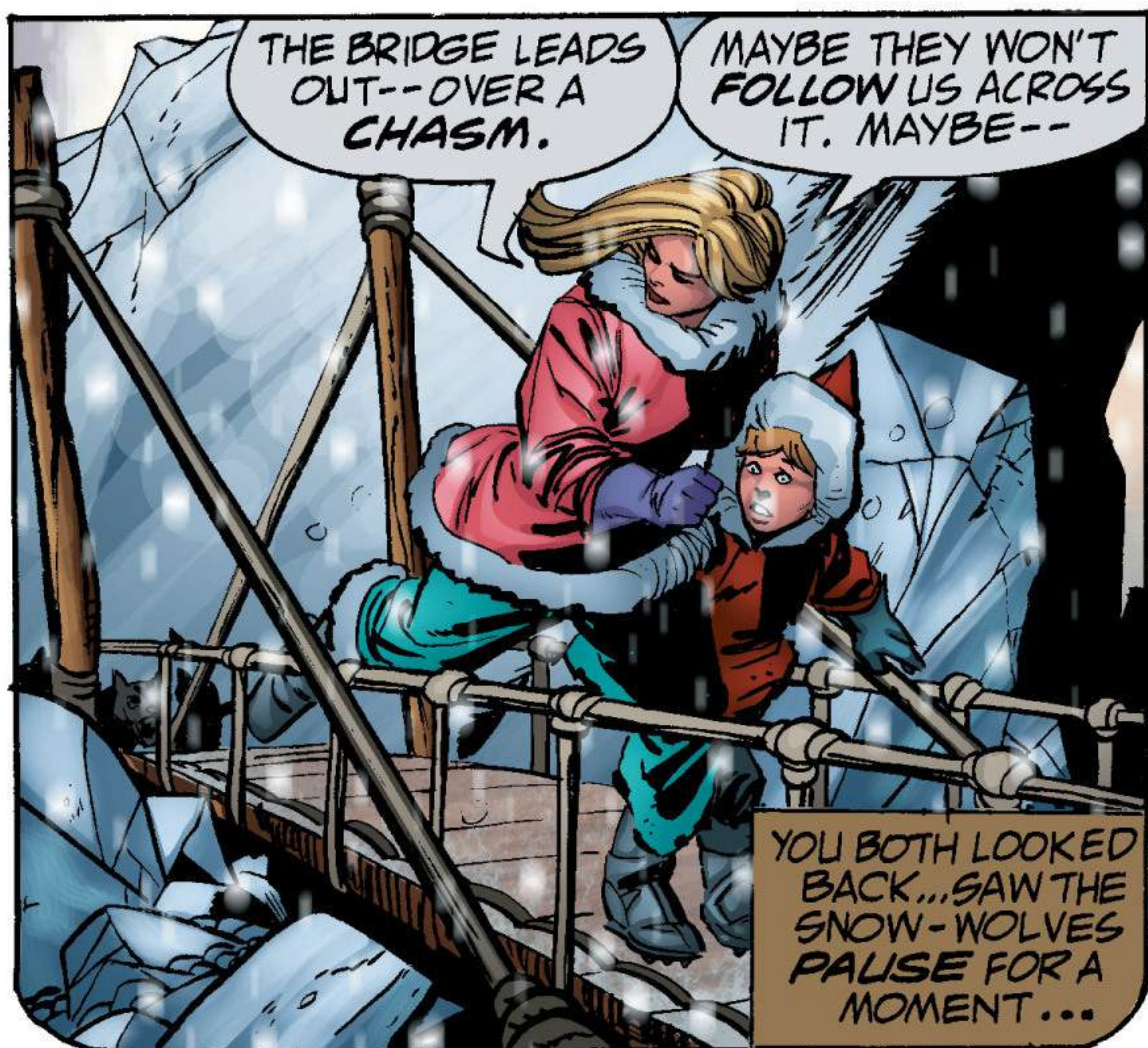
ARROOO

WOLVES!



RUN, DANNY! RUN FOR THE BRIDGE!

HURRY, DARLING! HURRY!



THE BRIDGE LEADS OUT--OVER A CHASM.

MAYBE THEY WON'T FOLLOW US ACROSS IT. MAYBE--

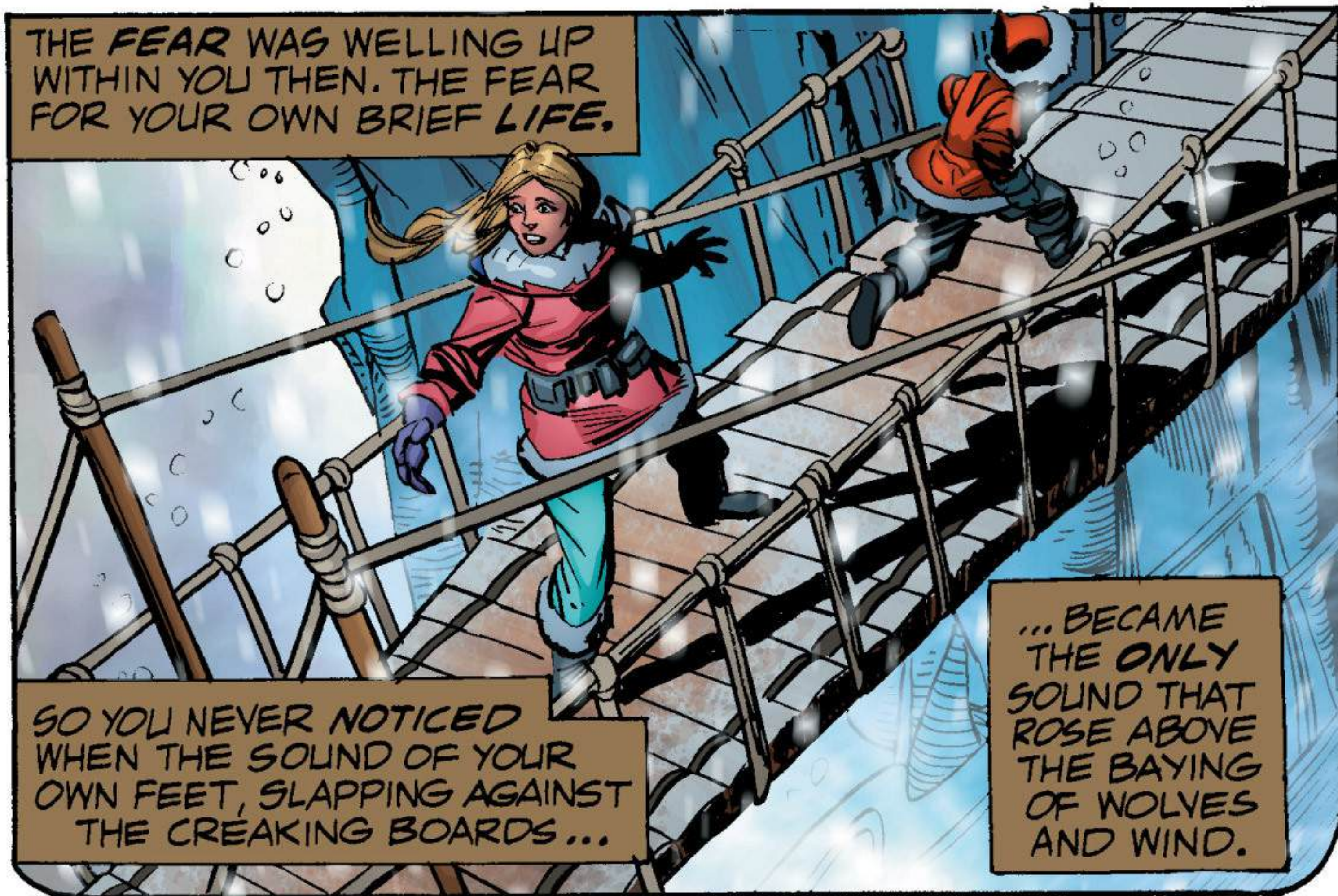
YOU BOTH LOOKED BACK...SAW THE SNOW-WOLVES PAUSE FOR A MOMENT...



BUT, YOU ALSO KNEW THAT IN AN INSTANT THEY'D BE AFTER YOU AGAIN...THAT THEY'D BE UPON YOU BEFORE YOU REACHED THE OTHER SIDE...



...UNLESS...!



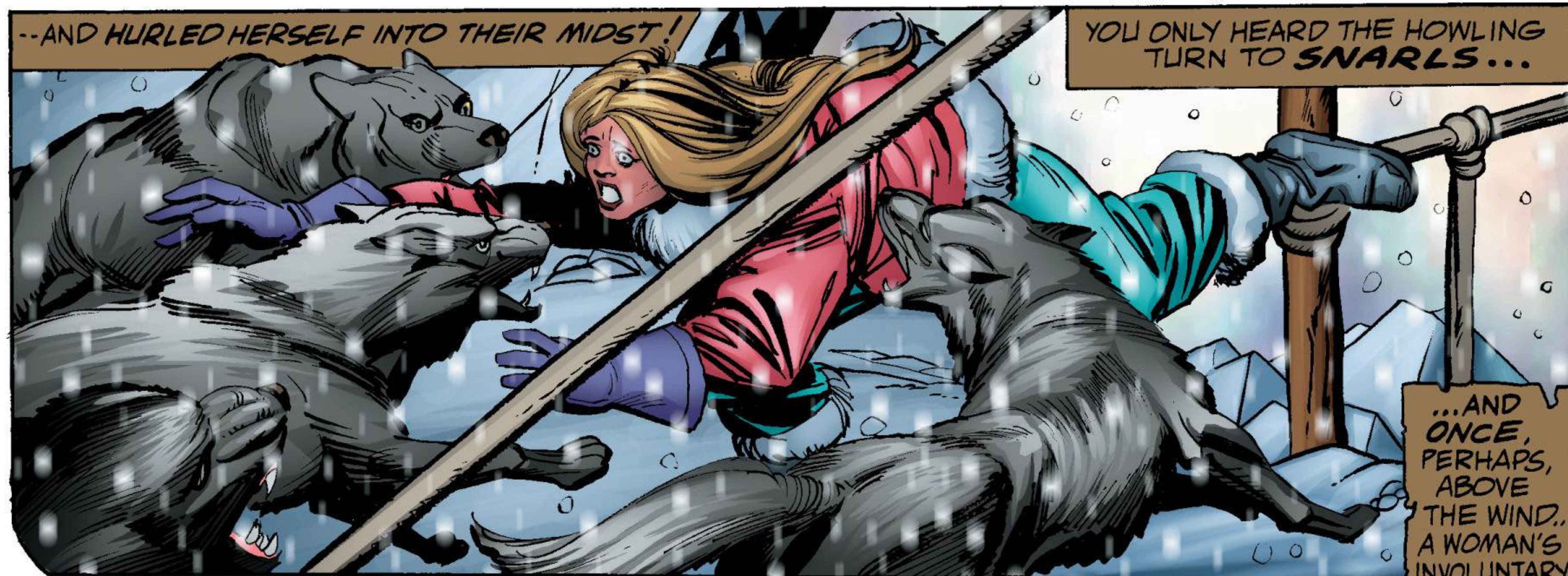
THE FEAR WAS WELLING UP WITHIN YOU THEN. THE FEAR FOR YOUR OWN BRIEF LIFE.

SO YOU NEVER NOTICED WHEN THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN FEET, SLAPPING AGAINST THE CREAKING BOARDS...

...BECAME THE ONLY SOUND THAT ROSE ABOVE THE BAYING OF WOLVES AND WIND.



YOU DIDN'T EVEN SEE HER, AS SHE TURNED--RACED BACK TOWARD THE RAVENING WOLVES...



--AND HURLED HERSELF INTO THEIR MIDST!

YOU ONLY HEARD THE HOWLING TURN TO **SNARLS**...

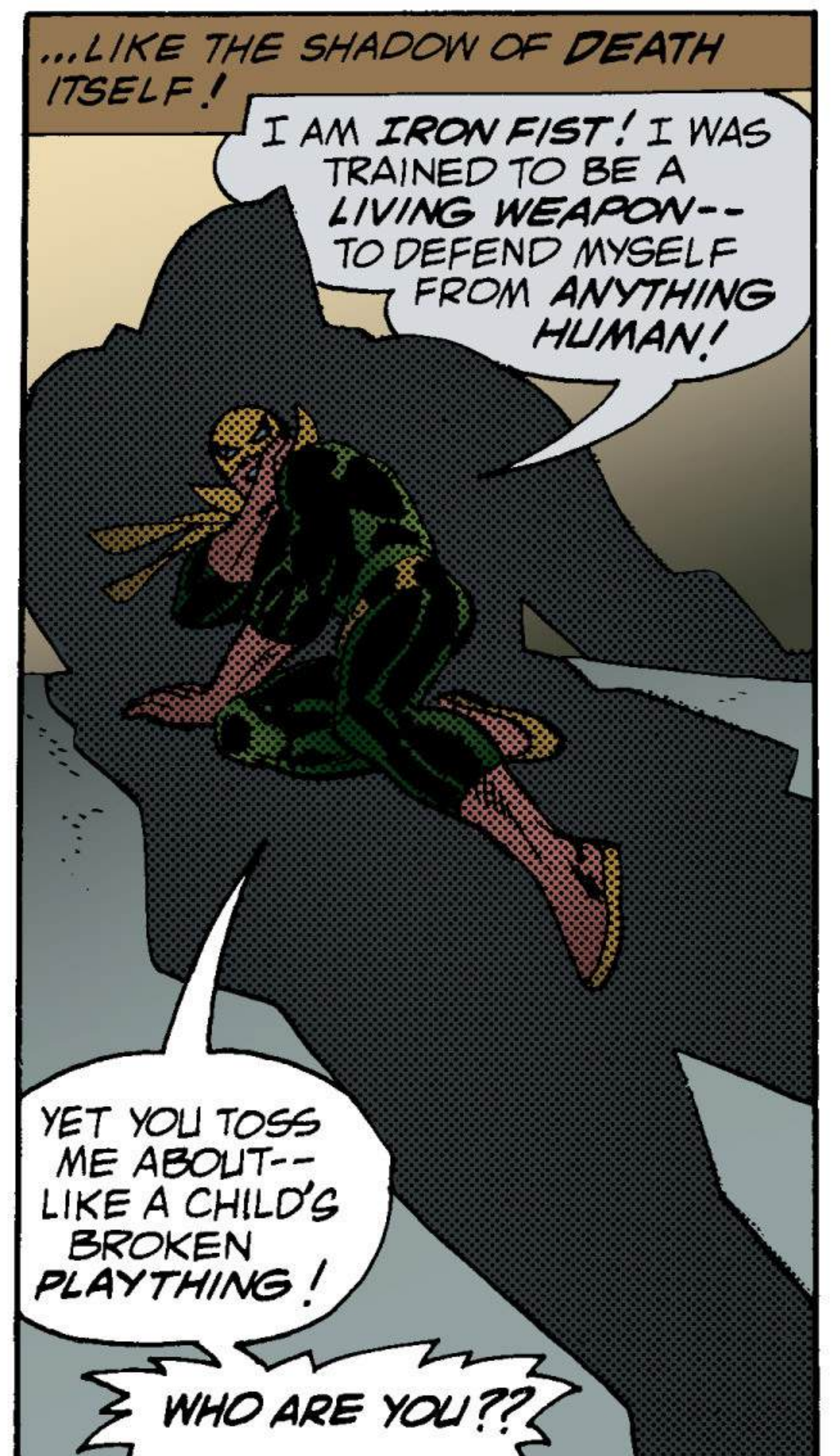
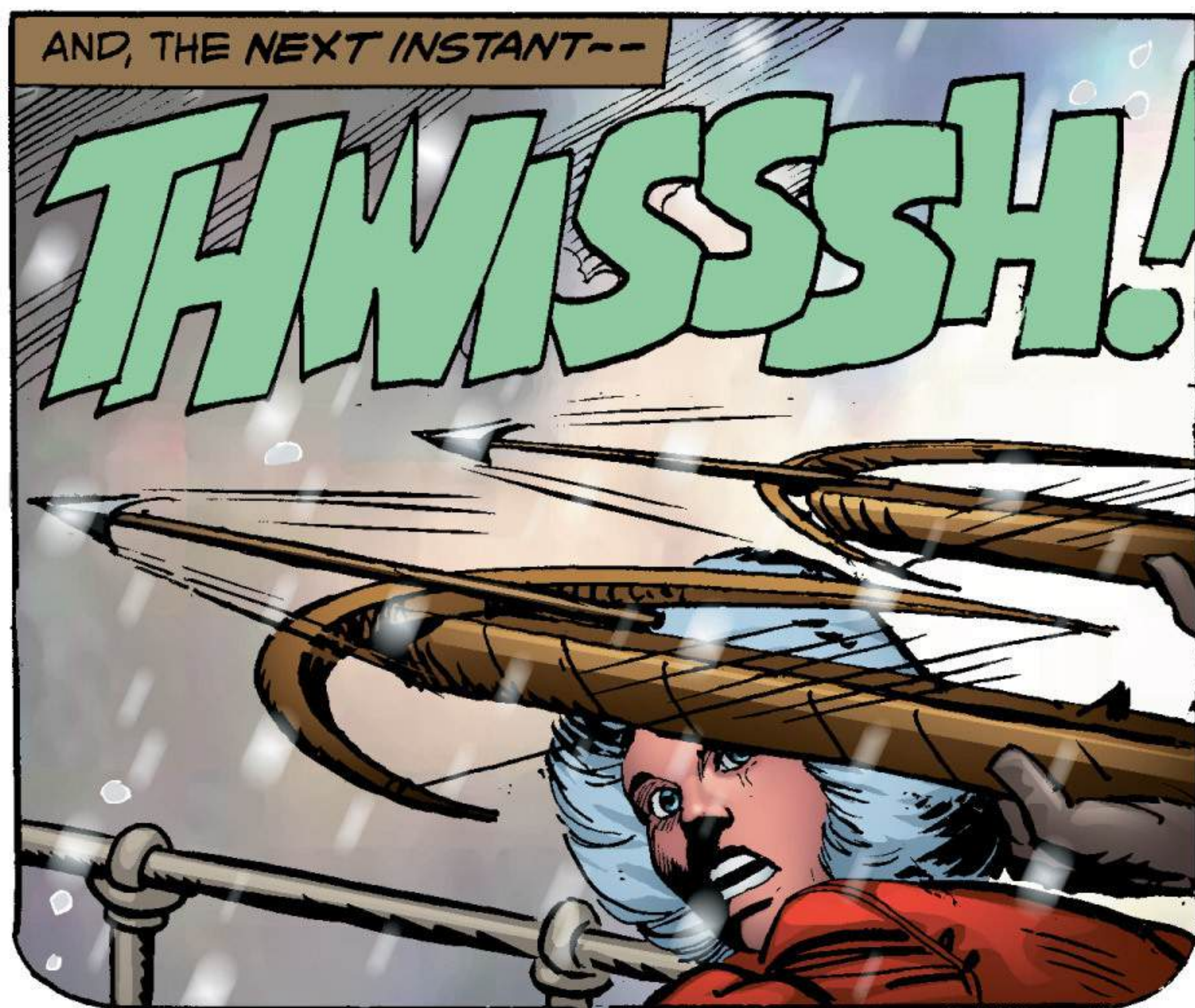
...AND **ONCE**, PERHAPS, ABOVE THE WIND... A WOMAN'S INVOLUNTARY SCREAM!



YOU PAUSED THEN--NOT QUITE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE. YOU TURNED, CONFUSED...

MOTHER...?

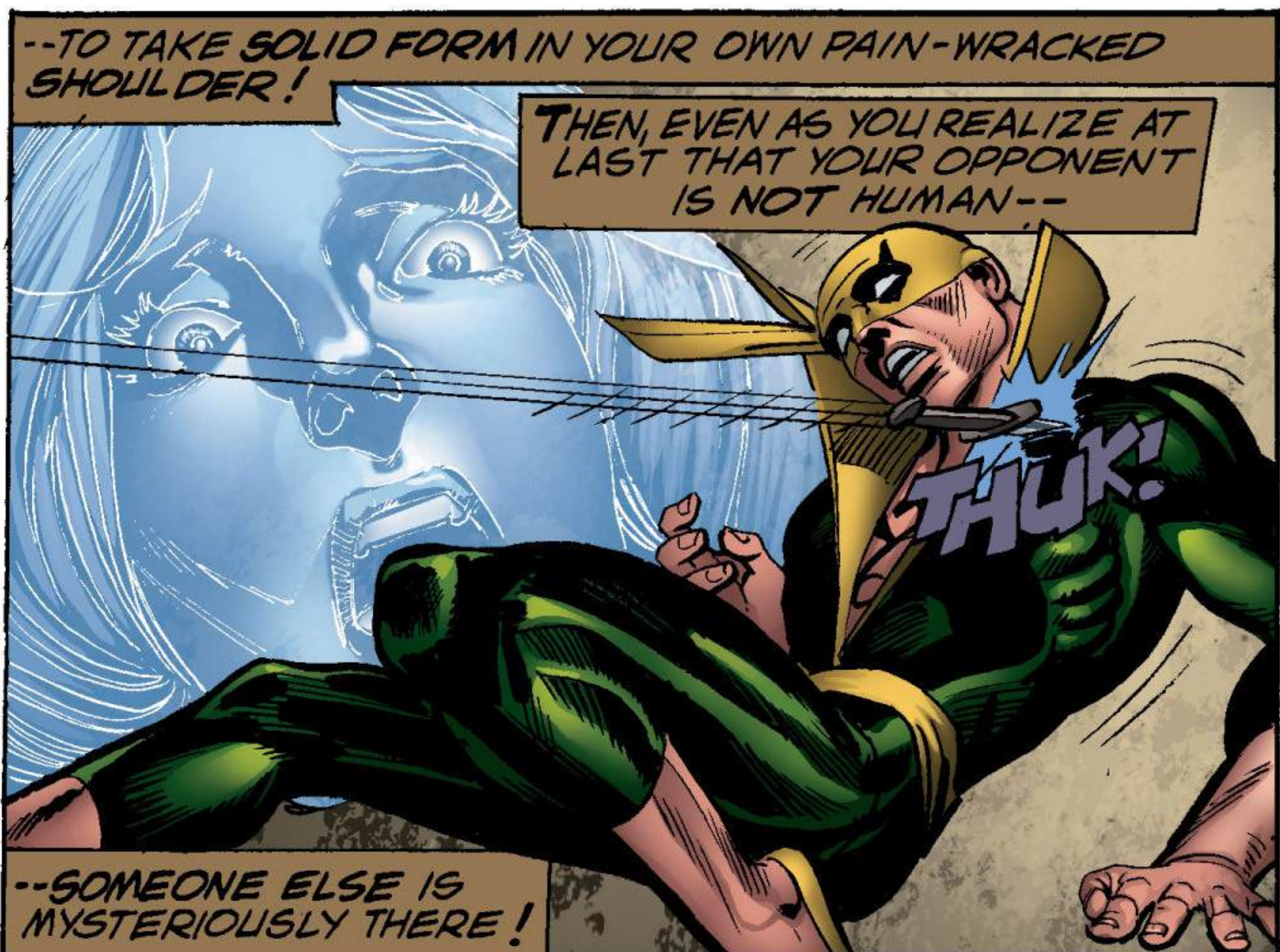
MOTHER!!





YOUR ONLY ANSWER:

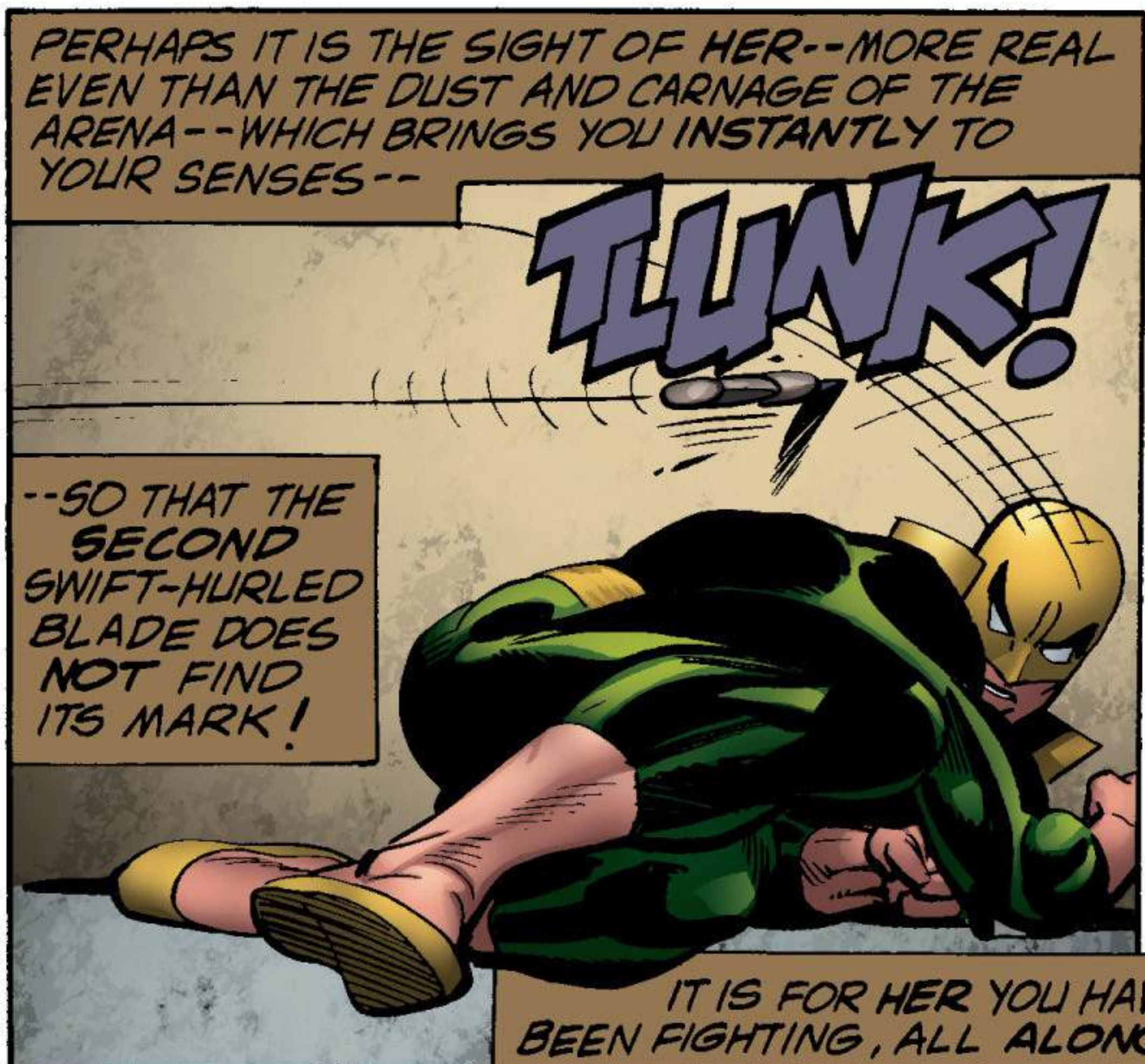
A BLUR OF DEADLY MOTION, STREAKING FROM OUT OF YOUR TORMENTOR'S VERY HAND--



--TO TAKE SOLID FORM IN YOUR OWN PAIN-WRACKED SHOULDER!

THEN, EVEN AS YOU REALIZE AT LAST THAT YOUR OPPONENT IS NOT HUMAN--

--SOMEONE ELSE IS MYSTERIOUSLY THERE!

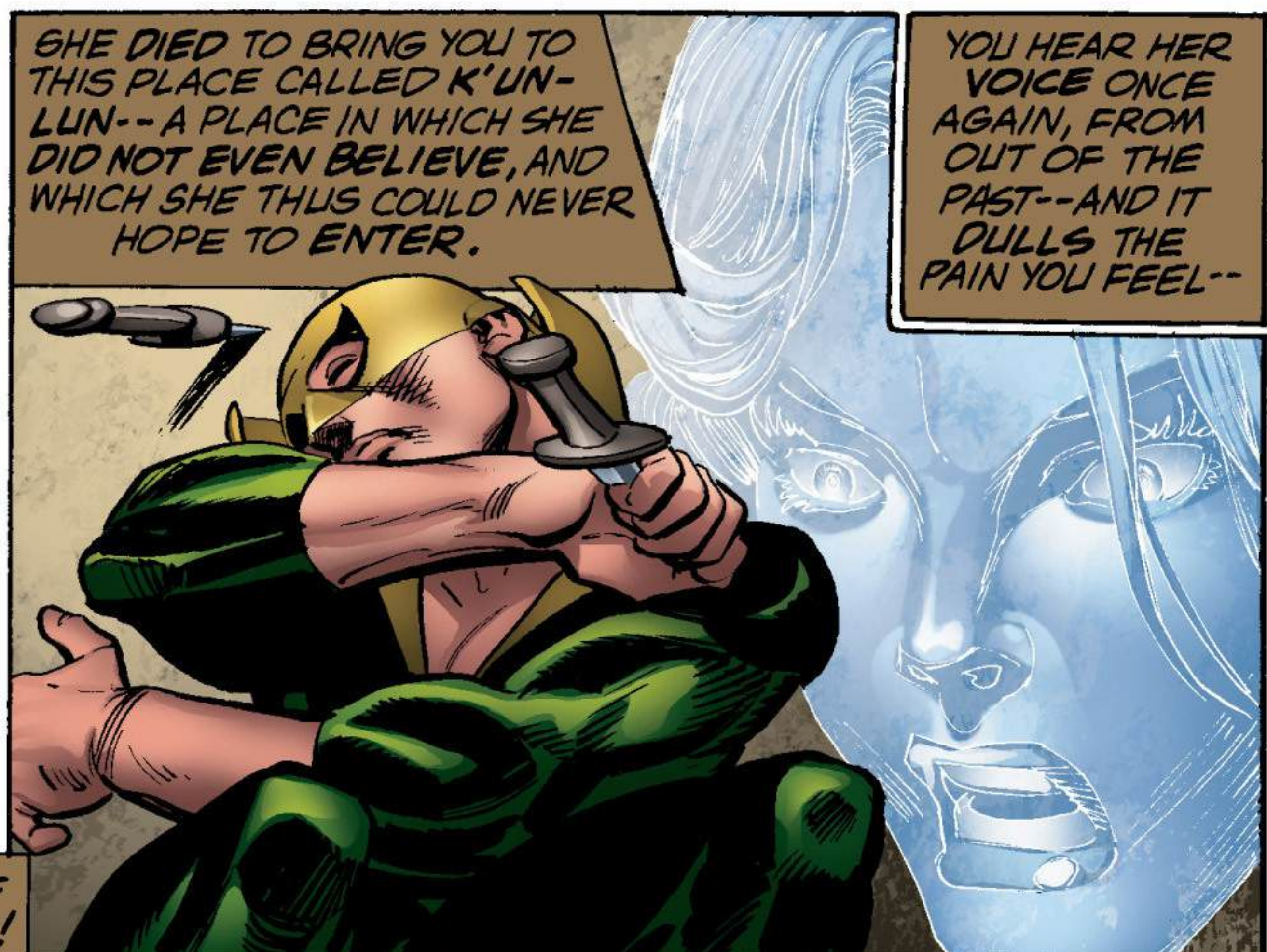


PERHAPS IT IS THE SIGHT OF HER--MORE REAL EVEN THAN THE DUST AND CARNAGE OF THE ARENA--WHICH BRINGS YOU INSTANTLY TO YOUR SENSES--

--SO THAT THE SECOND SWIFT-HURLED BLADE DOES NOT FIND ITS MARK!

TUNK!

IT IS FOR HER YOU HAVE BEEN FIGHTING, ALL ALONG!



SHE DIED TO BRING YOU TO THIS PLACE CALLED K'UN-LUN-- A PLACE IN WHICH SHE DID NOT EVEN BELIEVE, AND WHICH SHE THUS COULD NEVER HOPE TO ENTER.

YOU HEAR HER VOICE ONCE AGAIN, FROM OUT OF THE PAST--AND IT DULLS THE PAIN YOU FEEL--



--DULLS IT INTO INSENSITIVITY, THEN OBLIVION.

NO LONGER DO YOU FEEL THE PAIN--

--AND THE BLOOD WHICH DROPS COULD AS EASILY BELONG TO A CHILD WHO PERISHED TEN YEARS AGO.

NOW, YOU ARE MERELY--
IRON FIST!
AND, YOU ARE AS WELL--
A MAN GONE BERSERK!



HAI--

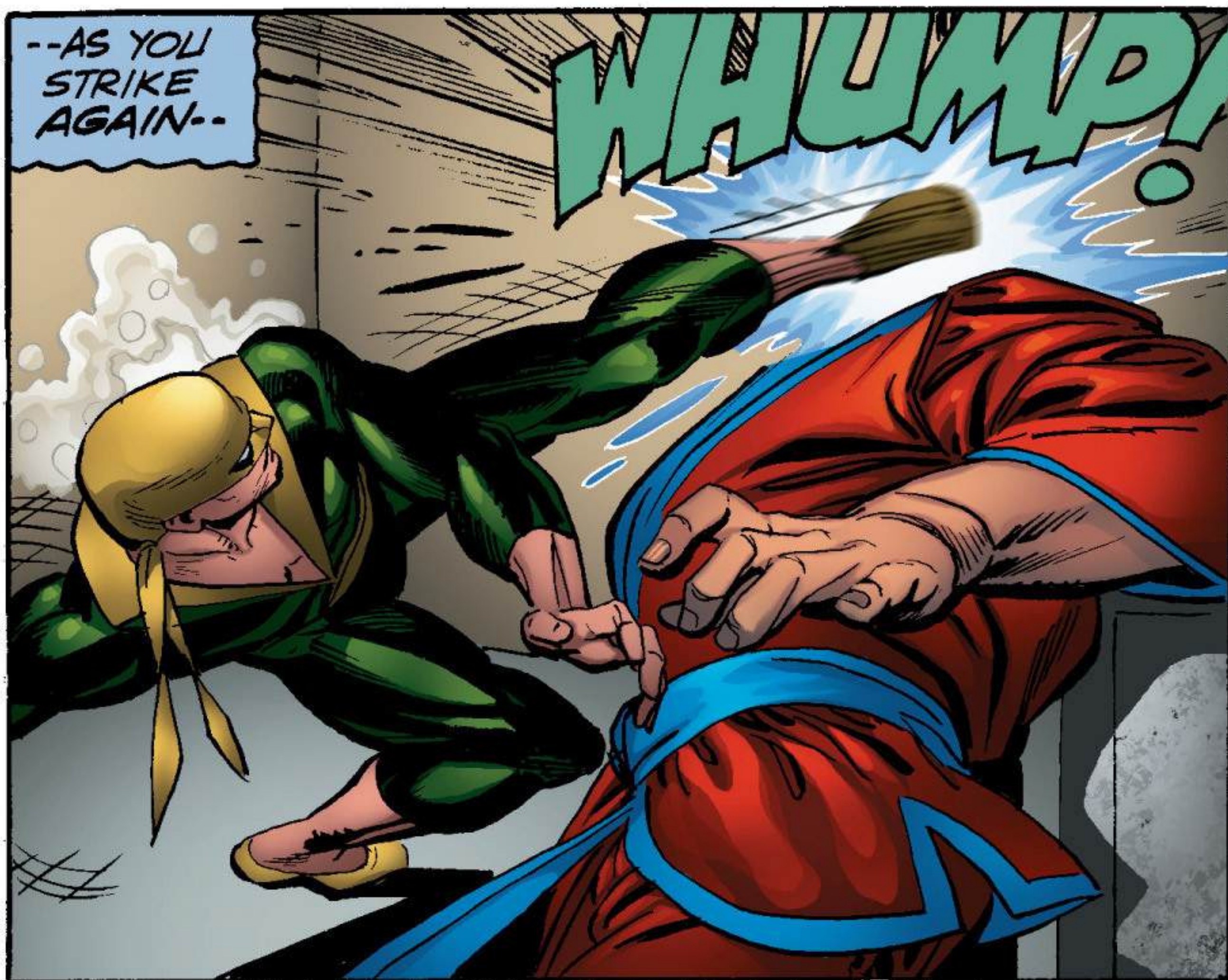


--YAH!

DRAK!

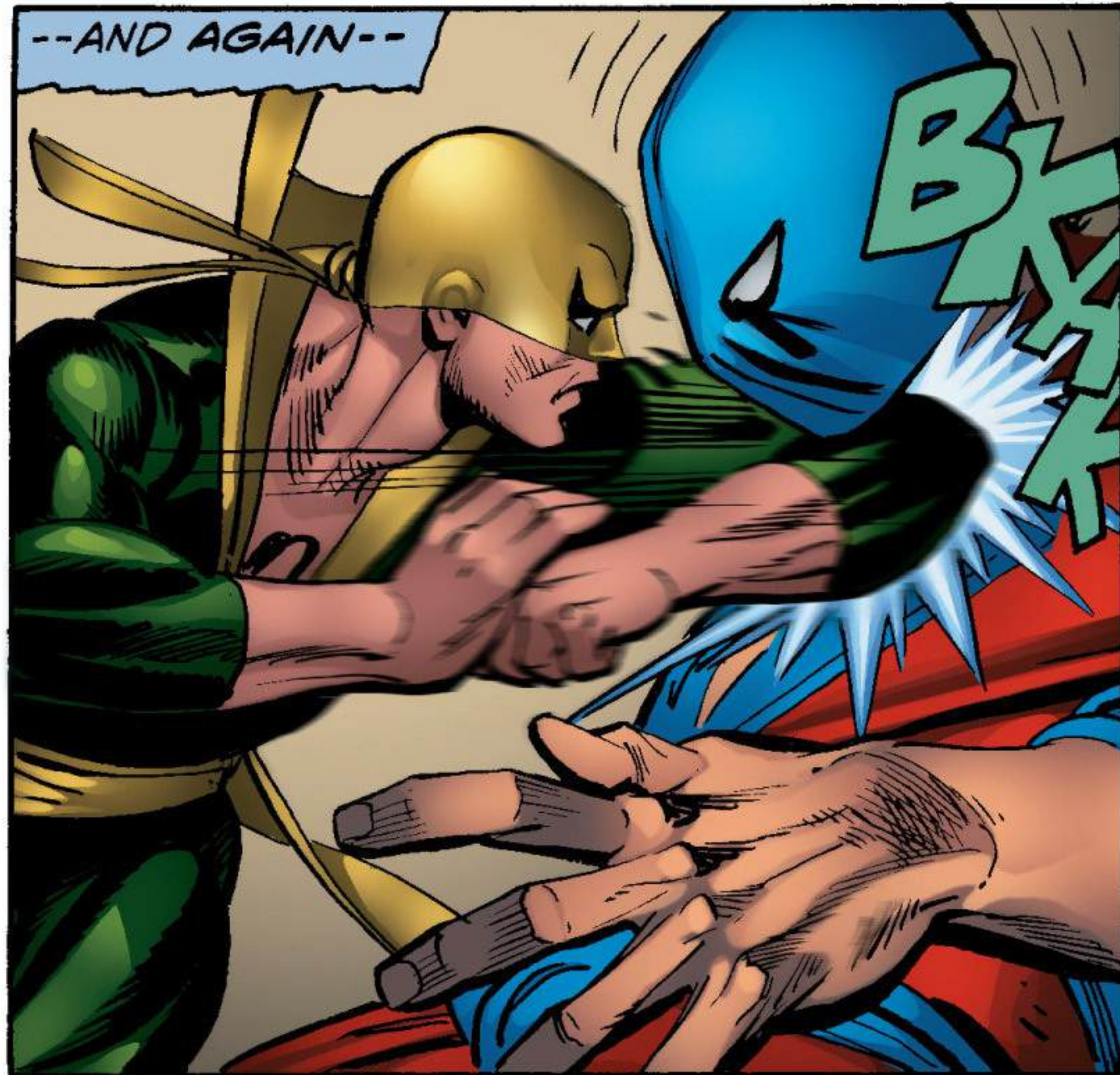
YOU KNOW YOU FAILED BEFORE-- WITH BLOWS YOU THOUGHT YOUR STRONGEST.

BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER NOW, AS YOU LEAP ANEW INTO THE JAWS OF STEEL-FLESHED DOOM--



--AS YOU STRIKE AGAIN--

WHUMP!



--AND AGAIN--

BKKK!



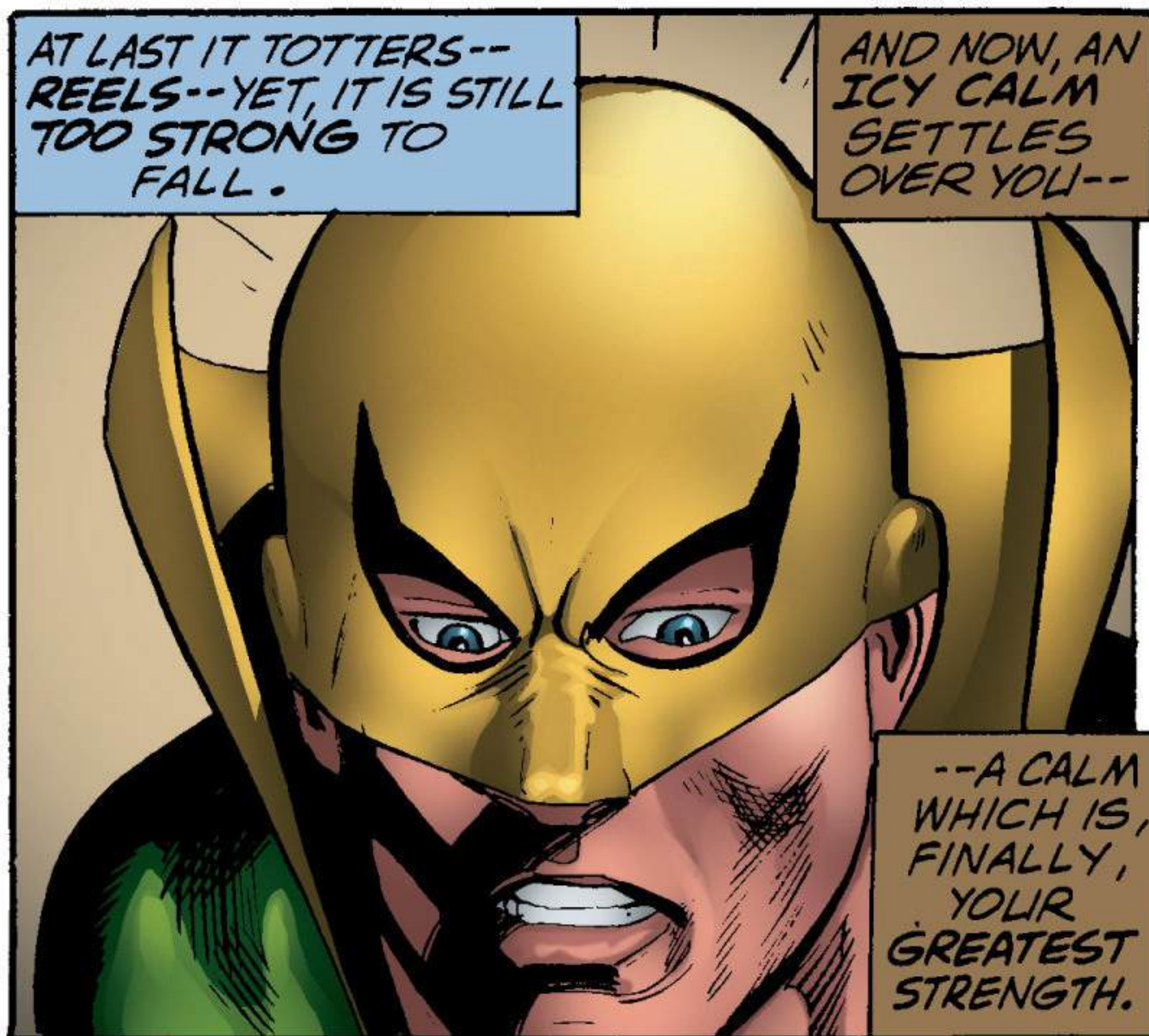
--AND YET AGAIN--

NOW, YOU CAN FEEL THE HARD, MAN-FORGED METAL BENEATH THE HOOD--FEEL IT START TO GIVE AND BEND AND TWIST.

AND, IF HE--IF IT COULD FEEL PAIN--

THE PONDEROUS GIANT'S MOVES BECOME SLUGGISH--SLOW--MECHANICAL--

--ITS PAIN WOULD DWARF ANY THAT YOU HAVE EVER KNOWN!



AT LAST IT TOTTERS--REELS--YET, IT IS STILL TOO STRONG TO FALL.

AND NOW, AN ICY CALM SETTLES OVER YOU--

--A CALM WHICH IS, FINALLY, YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH.



YOU CALL SILENTLY, INWARDLY, UPON THE INVINCIBLE WILL WHICH FORMS THE VERY CORE OF YOUR BEING.

UNFATHOMED RESERVES OF CONCENTRATION AND RESOLVE FLOW FROM YOUR BRAIN, YOUR SHOULDERS, YOUR LEGS, FROM EVERY PART OF A BODY HONED FOR TEN LONG YEARS--



--FLOW, MELD, AND MERGE INTO ONE PLACE--

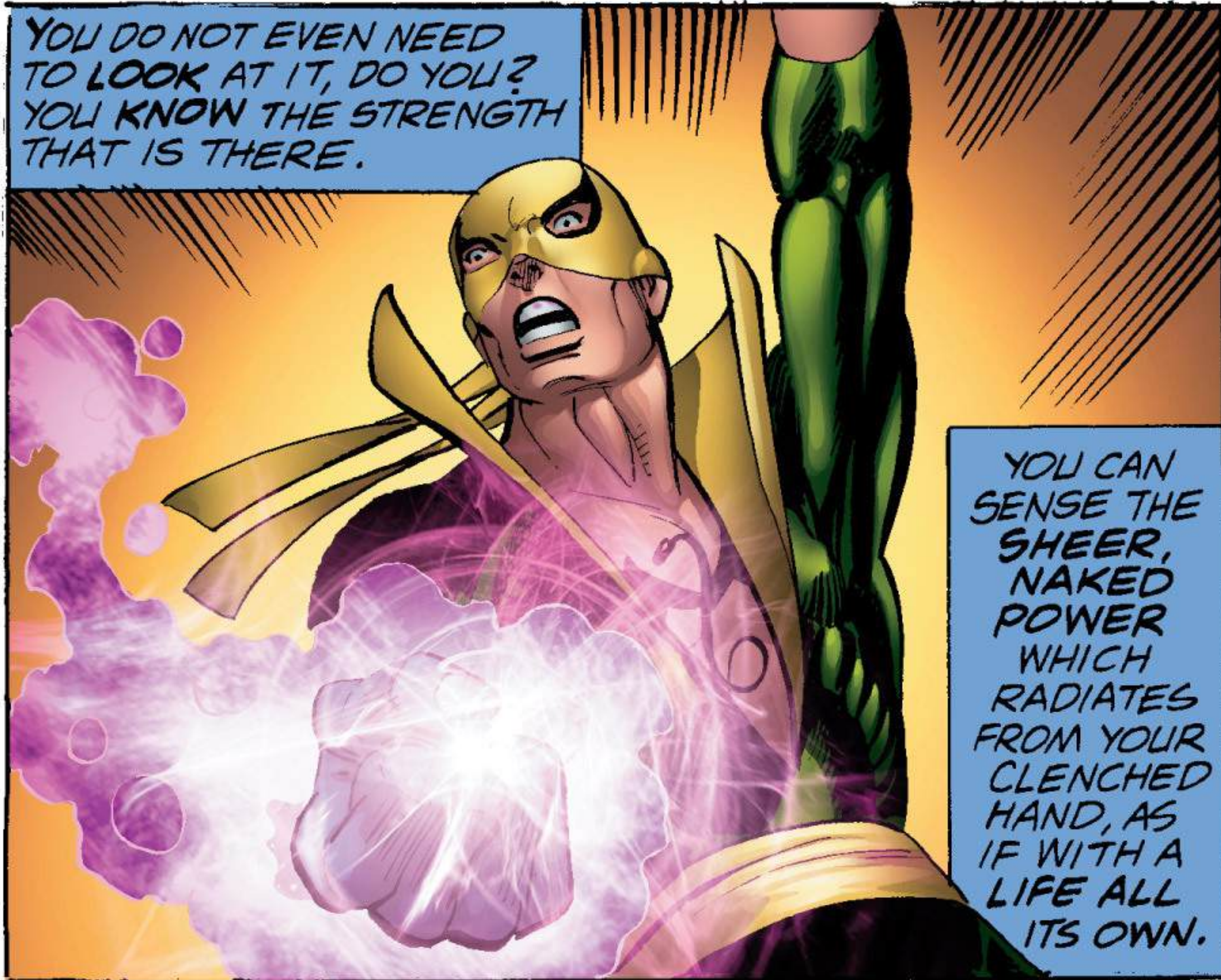
--INTO YOUR HAND--

--UNTIL IT BEGINS TO SMOULDER AND GLOW--



--UNTIL IT BECOMES LIKE LINTO--

--A THING OF IRON!



YOU DO NOT EVEN NEED TO LOOK AT IT, DO YOU? YOU KNOW THE STRENGTH THAT IS THERE.

YOU CAN SENSE THE SHEER, NAKED POWER WHICH RADIATES FROM YOUR CLENCHED HAND, AS IF WITH A LIFE ALL ITS OWN.



NOW, MORE THAN EVER--

NOW, PERHAPS REALLY FOR THE FIRST TIME--



-- YOU ARE IRON FIST--



-- AND YOU ARE TRIUMPHANT!

I CAN SEE IT CLEARLY NOW, O AUGUST PERSONAGE... AND YOU DRAGON-KINGS...

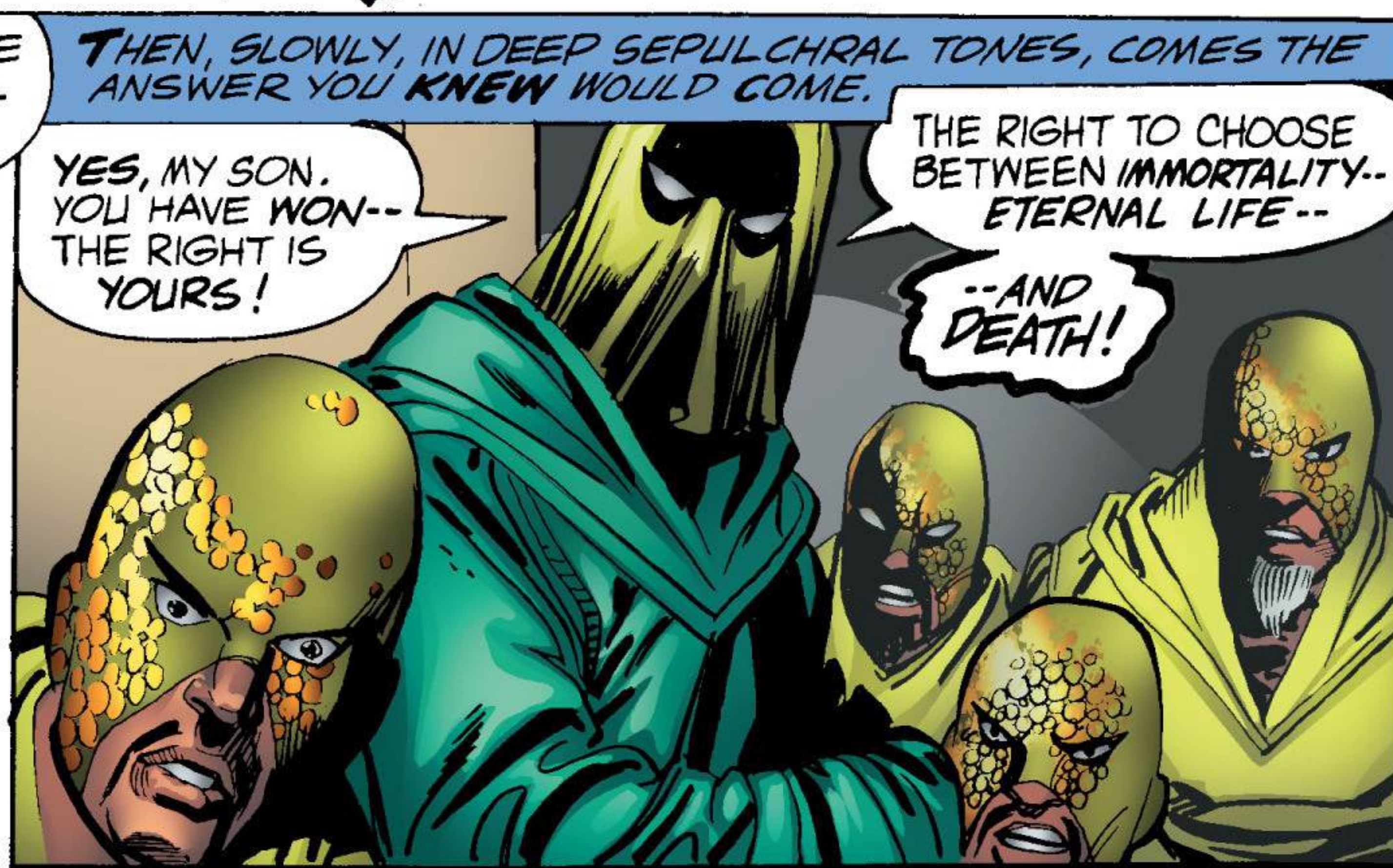


FIRST, THE CHALLENGE OF THE MANY... THEN OF THE ONE...

AND LASTLY, THE CHALLENGE OF MYSELF-- OF MY WILL TO LIVE-- OF MY FITNESS TO LIVE!

I STAND BLOODY-- BUT UNBOWED. NEVER BOWED!

AND I CLAIM, AT LAST-- THE RIGHT WHICH NOW IS MINE TO CLAIM!



THEN, SLOWLY, IN DEEP SEPULCHRAL TONES, COMES THE ANSWER YOU KNEW WOULD COME.

YES, MY SON. YOU HAVE WON-- THE RIGHT IS YOURS!

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN IMMORTALITY-- ETERNAL LIFE--

--AND DEATH!

End of Chapter I.

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MARVEL PREMIERE™
FEATURING

IRON FIST™

YOUR *KUNG FU*
FIREWORKS WON'T
HELP YOU, MASKED
MAN--NOT AGAINST
THE SCYTHE!

HE'S--RIGHT!
I CAN
BREAK CHAINS--
SMASH CONCRETE
WITH MY
BARE FISTS--

BUT IF HE
STRIKES ME WITH
THAT RAZOR-SHARP
BLADE--I'M A
DEAD MAN!!

JAWS
OF THE **DRAGON!**

Chapter 2:

HEART OF THE DRAGON!

YOU ARE IRON FIST--
AND THE ODORS THAT
ASSAULT YOUR TENDER
NOSTRILS THIS NIGHT
FILL YOU WITH A
GROWING FEELING
OF REVULSION.

YOU HAVE HEARD MANY
STORIES OF THIS STRANGE
PLACE CALLED NEW YORK--
THIS CITY THAT IS HARDLY
MORE THAN A MEMORY
TO YOU--

--AND, UNFORTUNATELY,
IT SEEMS THAT ALL
THE TALES ARE TRUE.

STILL, YOU DRAW UPON
YOUR INNER RESOURCES--
CLOSE YOUR WELL-HONED
SENSES TO THE OFFEN-
SIVENESS THAT SURROUNDS
YOU--AS YOU CONCENTRATE
ONCE MORE UPON YOUR
MISSION--

--FOR YOU HAVE COME TO
THIS MUCH-BEGRIMED
METROPOLIS TO KILL A
MAN--AND YOU CANNOT
REST UNTIL THE DEED
IS DONE!



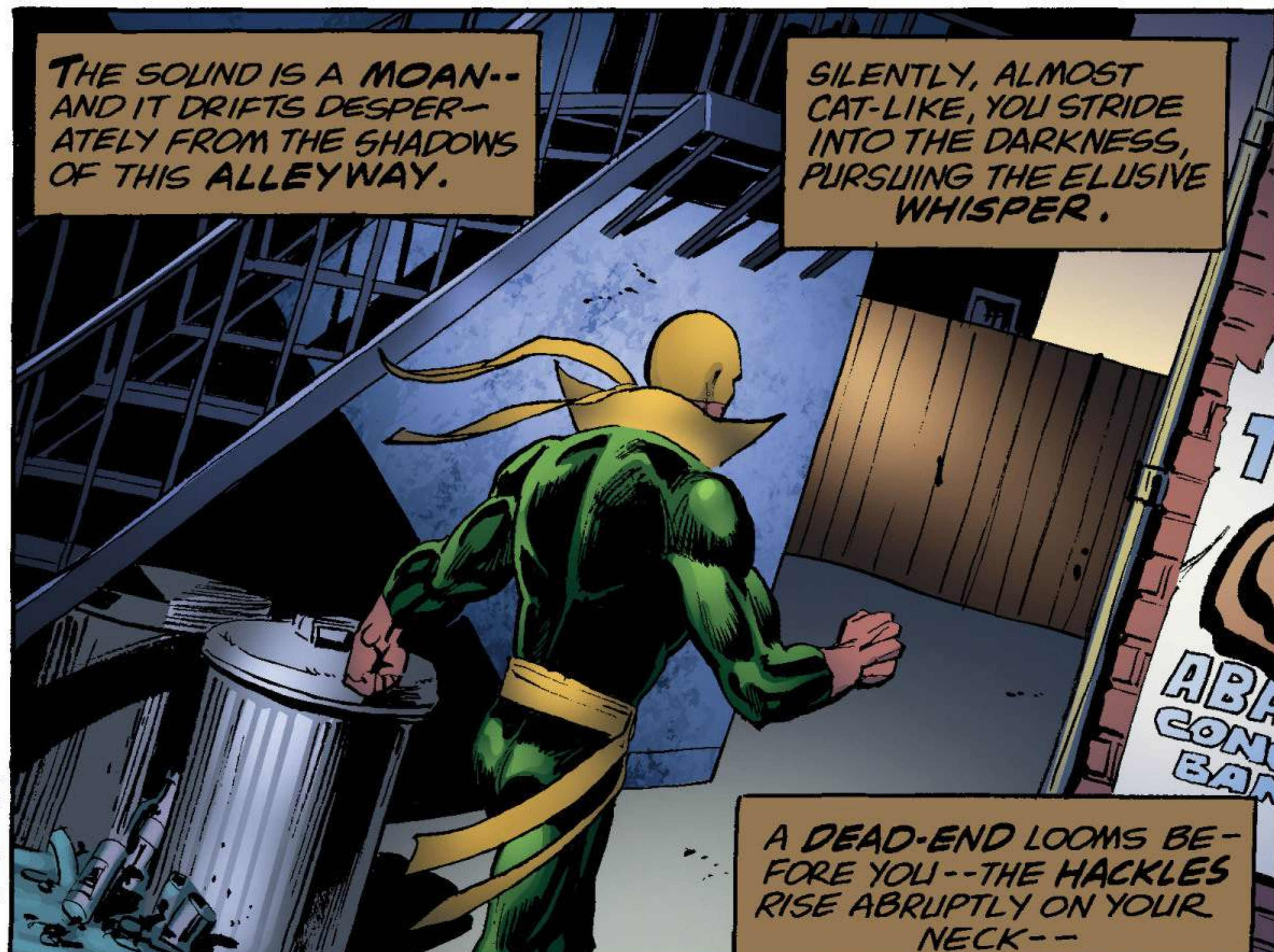
IN YOUR MIND'S EYE, YOU SEE HIS FACE-- AND FURY GROWS WITHIN YOU AT THE SIGHT OF IT--



--BUT IT IS FURY CAST QUICKLY ASIDE--AS A SOUND INTERRUPTS YOUR GRIM REVERIE.

THE SOUND IS A MOAN-- AND IT DRIFTS DESPERATELY FROM THE SHADOWS OF THIS ALLEYWAY.

SILENTLY, ALMOST CAT-LIKE, YOU STRIDE INTO THE DARKNESS, PURSUING THE ELUSIVE WHISPER.



A DEAD-END LOOMS BEFORE YOU--THE HACKLES RISE ABRUPTLY ON YOUR NECK--

--AND YOU CURSE YOURSELF FOR A FOOL TO HAVE WALKED SO WILLINGLY INTO A TRAP!

LOOKIN' FOR SOMETHING, PAL?



YOU HAVE SEEN THEIR TYPE BEFORE--THE LOW, SLOPING BROWS--THE CRUEL TIGHTNESS AT THE CORNERS OF THEIR EYES...

THEY ARE CONFIDENT--PERHAPS TOO CONFIDENT--AND THUS THEY ARE VULNERABLE!

STEP ASIDE AND LET ME PASS, PLEASE!

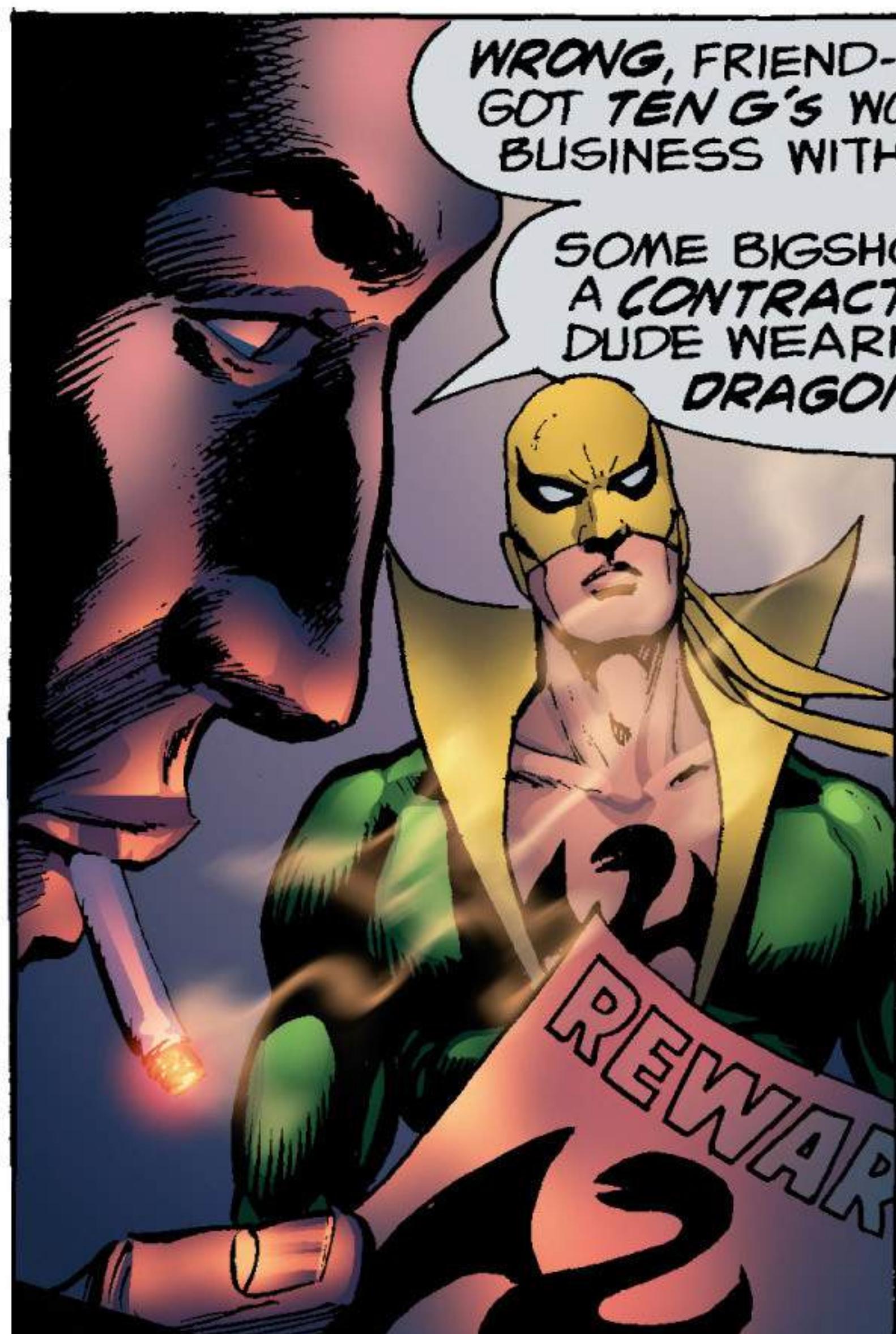
YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH ME!



WRONG, FRIEND--WE GOT TEN G'S WORTH A BUSINESS WITH YOU.

SOME BIGSHOT PUT OUT A CONTRACT ON ANY DUDE WEARING THIS DRAGON BRAND--

REWARD



--DEAD OR ALIVE, IT SAYS --

--AN', BUDDY, WE AIM TO COLLECT THAT DOUGH-- ANY WAY WE HAVE TO!

THEY COME AT YOU WILDLY, WEAPONS FLASHING IN THE DIM LIGHT --





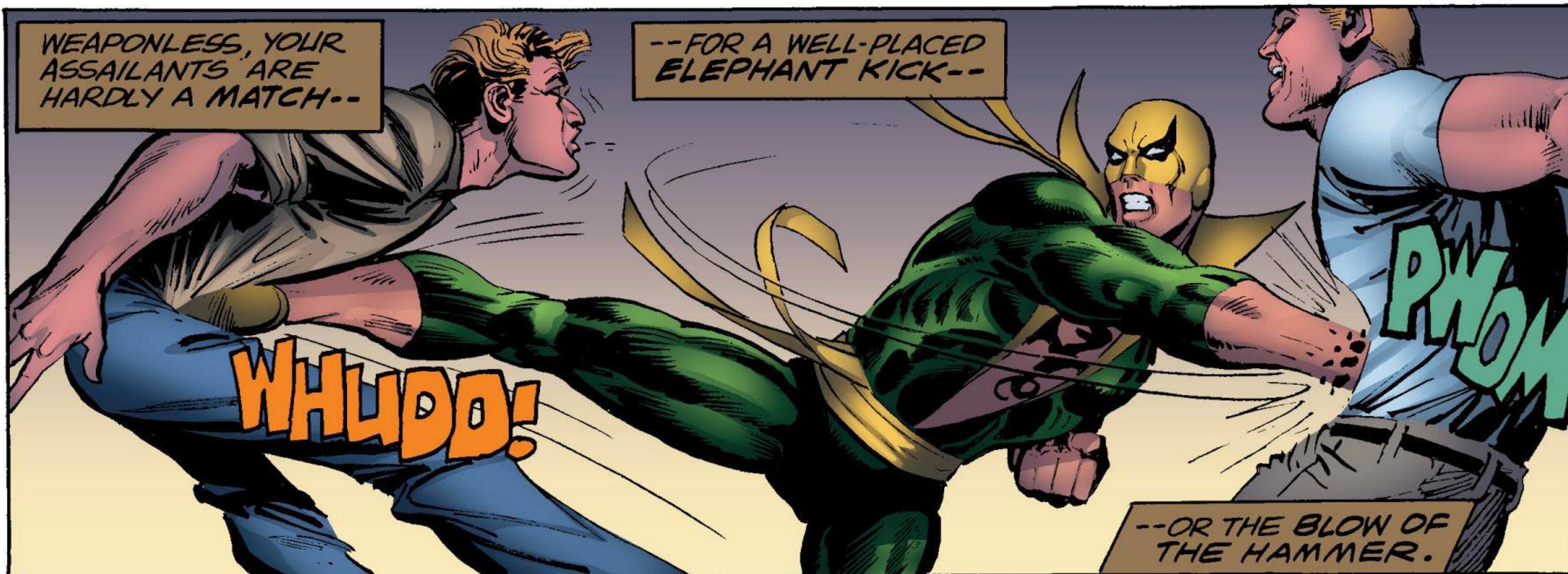
YOU CALM YOURSELF INWARDLY...



--THEN MEET SLASHING PIPE AND KNIFE--
BLADE WITH THE SKILLS FEW MEN
SAVE YOU HAVE MASTERED.

FKAK!

HOK



WEAPONLESS, YOUR
ASSAILANTS ARE
HARDLY A MATCH--

--FOR A WELL-PLACED
ELEPHANT KICK--

WHUDD!

PWOW

--OR THE BLOW OF
THE HAMMER.



YOUR TWO ATTACKERS SPRAWL TO
THE GROUND-- AND ARE INSTANTLY
REPLACED
BY THEIR
COM-
PANIONS--

--BUT A LOCKING BLOCK TURNS ASIDE
THE BAYONET STROKE OF ONE ...

--WHILE A BEAR THRUST STEALS
AWAY THE BREATH OF THE OTHER.

CHUK!

THE SWORD HAND
CONVINCES THE FINAL
AGGRESSOR TO TOSS
HIS BLADE ASIDE --



--AND PERHAPS HIS IN-
VOLUNTARY SCREAM
IS WHAT PREVENTS YOU
FROM HEARING THE
FOOTSTEPS BEHIND
YOU --



SPLANG!

--UNTIL IT IS FAR TOO LATE!



YOU STUMBLE TO YOUR KNEES, YOUR HEAD REELING FROM THE PAIN--

--AND THE MEMORIES COME FLOODING BACK UNBIDDEN.

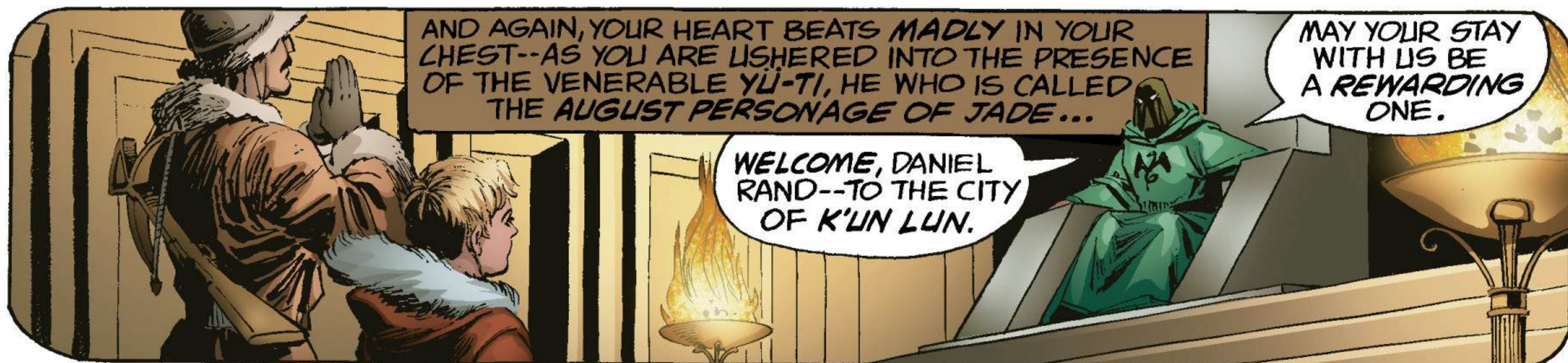
AGAIN, YOU ARE THE **BOY** YOU WERE TEN YEARS AGO. AGAIN, YOU ARE **AFRAID**--

--AND AGAIN, YOUR INNOCENT'S EYES GROW WIDE AS YOU FIRST BEHOLD THE MOUNTAIN CALLED **K'UN LUN**.



AGAIN, YOU REMEMBER THE **AWE** YOU FELT AS YOU PASSED FOR THE FIRST TIME THRU THE ANCIENT CITY'S **GATES**--

--THE FEELING THAT YOU WERE ENTERING NOT A CITY, BUT A **FANTASY**-- AND THAT TO **DISBELIEVE** IN THE DREAM WOULD SURELY BE **SACRILEGE**.



AND AGAIN, YOUR HEART BEATS **MADLY** IN YOUR CHEST--AS YOU ARE **USHERED** INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE VENERABLE **YU-TI**, HE WHO IS CALLED THE **AUGUST PERSONAGE OF JADE**...

WELCOME, DANIEL RAND--TO THE CITY OF **K'UN LUN**.

MAY YOUR STAY WITH US BE A **REWARDING** ONE.



WE KNOW OF YOUR FATHER'S **FATE**, MY SON--AND THE FATE OF YOUR **MOTHER** AS WELL--AND OUR HEARTS **GRIEVE** OPENLY FOR THEM!

TO LOSE ONE'S **PARENTS** IS TO LOSE THE **ROOTS** OF **HERITAGE**.

STILL, WE SHALL TRY TO MAKE YOU **HAPPY** HERE, DANIEL!



IF THERE IS EVER ANYTHING YOU **WANT**, MERELY NAME IT--

--AND IT WILL BE **YOURS**!



THERE'S ONLY **ONE** THING I WANT, MISTER...

I WANT REVENGE!!

YOU REMEMBER THE **SORROW** THAT SEEMED TO FILL THE AUGUST ONE'S EYES AS HE LED YOU FROM THE TEMPLE TO A SPRAWLING, SUN-LIT **COURT...**

YOU ASK THE ONE THING WE CANNOT **GIVE**, MY SON--FOR **REVENGE** IS A WEAPON THAT CUTS **TWO WAYS** AND CUTS **DEEP**. IT MUST NEVER BE GIVEN AS A **GIFT**.

BUT PERHAPS WE CAN GIVE YOU **ANOTHER GIFT**, MORE PRECIOUS AND MORE **LASTING** BY FAR!

THIS IS **LEI KUNG**, THE **THUNDERER**. IF YOU ARE **WILLING**, DANIEL, HE WILL **TUTOR** YOU--IN THE **WAYS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS**!

PERHAPS IN **STRENGTHENING** YOUR **BODY**, YOU WILL **STRENGTHEN** YOUR **SPIRIT** AS WELL--AND THUS TURN YOUR **HATRED** **ASIDE**.

YOU ACCEPTED YU-TI'S OFFER--**GLADLY**.

YOUR TRAINING WILL BE **VIGOROUS**, MAN-CHILD--

--EVEN **TORTUROUS** AT TIMES!

BUT IF, BY CHANCE, YOU PROVE **EQUAL** TO THE TASK--

--YOU WILL KNOW HOW IT **FEELS** TO WEAR THE **CROWN OF FU-HSI**... THE **KING OF VIPERS**!

THE NEXT YEARS SEEM TO **FLY** BEFORE YOUR MEMORY'S EYE: **LEI KUNG** DEVOTES HIMSELF TO YOU--AS YOU DEVOTE **YOURSELF** TO YOUR STUDIES--AND UNDER THE **THUNDERER'S** TUTELAGE, YOU GROW **SUPPLE**, **STRAIGHT**-- AND **STRONG**--

--AND THIS IS AS IT **SHOULD** BE--FOR YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE ANYTHING LESS THAN **PERFECT**.

AT LAST, YOUR **SIXTEENTH BIRTH-DAY** COMES...

--AND YOU STAND **SILENTLY** BEFORE THE **GLOWING SERPENT-KING**.

--BUT NEVER AGAIN AFTER **TODAY**.

--THEN YOUR EYES **NARROW**--

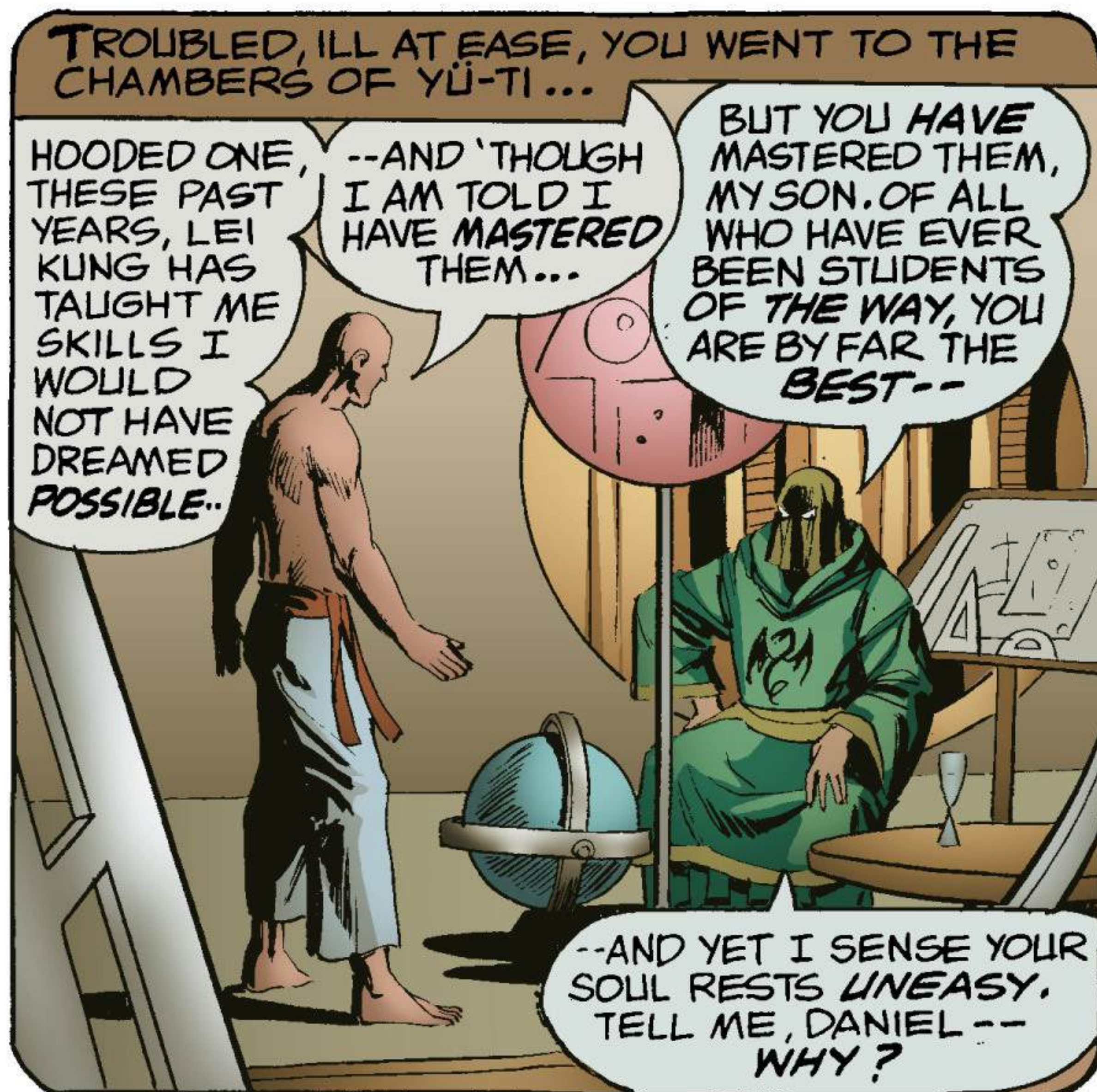
--AND YOU KNOW AT LAST HOW IT **FEELS** TO WEAR THE **CROWN OF THE KING**.

--YOUR HAND **MOVES**--

IT **FEELS HOLLOW!**

FOR YEARS, HE HAS SEEMED TO **MOCK** YOU--**SCORN** YOU--

RESPECTFULLY, YOU **ADDRESS** HIM--





YOUR ASSAILANTS ARE NOT INTELLIGENT MEN--BUT EVEN THEY QUICKLY REALIZE THAT NO REWARD IS WORTH SUCH SKILLFULLY-INFLICTED PAIN.

THEY FLEE--

OKAY, FREAK, SCORE ONE FER YOU--BUT YOU AIN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS!

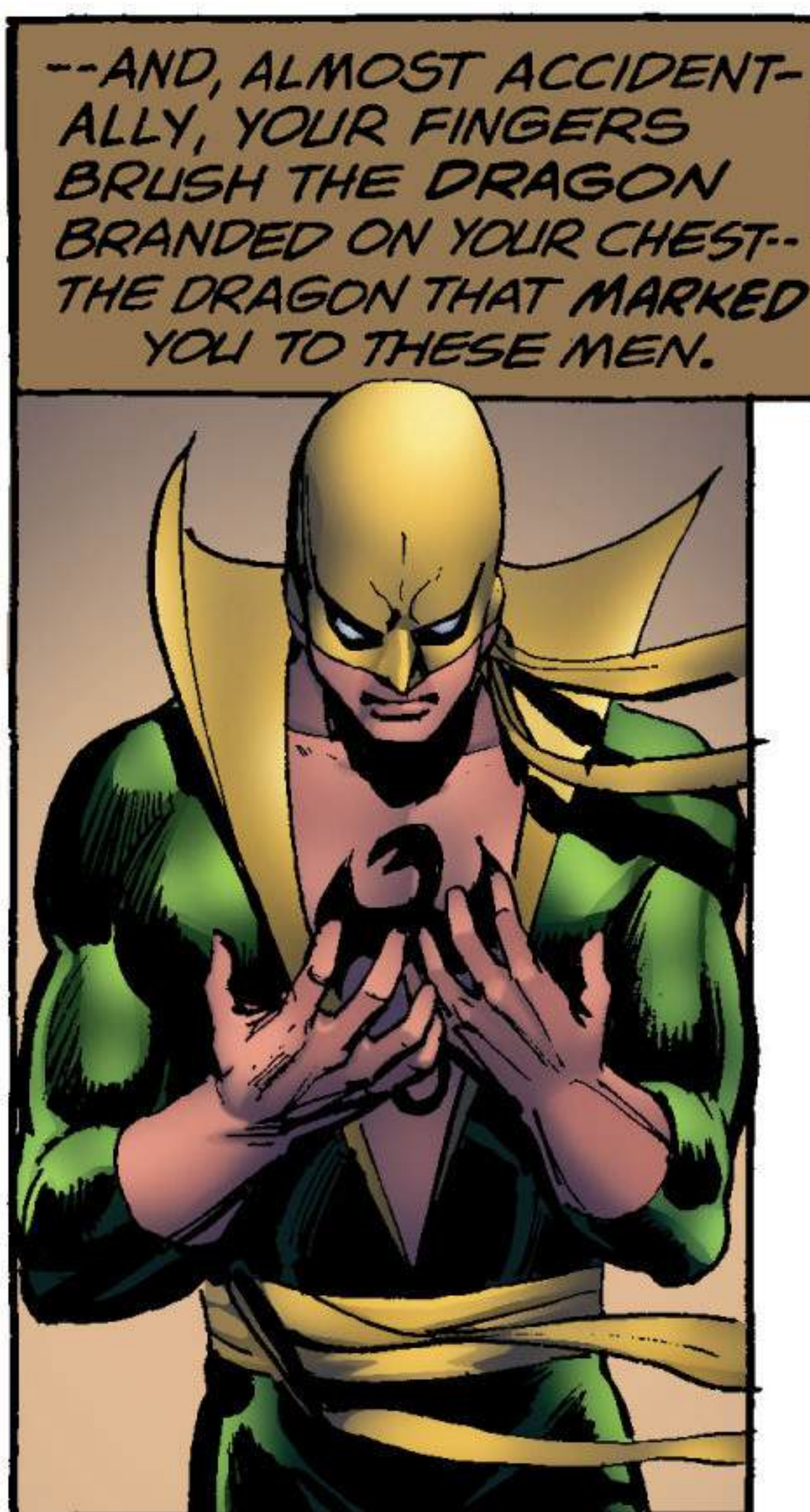


AND YOU STAND, BATHED IN THE SWEAT OF YOUR EXERTION, WONDERING WHO COULD HAVE KNOWN OF YOUR COMING --

--AND PLACED SUCH A PRICE ON YOUR HEAD.



THEN, FINDING NO ANSWERS, YOU SURVEY YOUR INJURIES... BONES INTACT--BUISES SUPERFICIAL--



--AND, ALMOST ACCIDENTALLY, YOUR FINGERS BRUSH THE DRAGON BRANDED ON YOUR CHEST--THE DRAGON THAT MARKED YOU TO THESE MEN.



YOU CONSIDER THE DRAGON--THEN NOTICE YOUR WEAPON-HANDS--

...AND AGAIN THE MEMORIES COME...



YOUR HANDS: YOU WORKED DILIGENTLY TO CONDITION THEM AS LEI KUNG SAID YOU MUST--



--THRUSTING THEM CEASELESSLY INTO A DEEP TUB OF SAND--TO BUILD THE CALLUS AND DEADEN THE PAIN--



--AND, WHEN THE SAND WAS NO LONGER ENOUGH, INTO GRAVEL--



--AND, AT LAST, INTO BUCKETS OF ROCK--



--UNTIL YOUR HANDS BECAME AS THE ROCK--UNFEELING, IRRESISTIBLE--

HAI!

THRACK!



BUT STILL--

--IT IS NOT **ENOUGH!**

NOT **ENOUGH**? WHAT MORE DO YOU **SEEK**, MY SON?

YOU ARE ALREADY EVERYTHING A MAN COULD EVER **HOP**E TO BE AND YET...

NO-- PERHAPS I SPEAK TOO **SOON!**



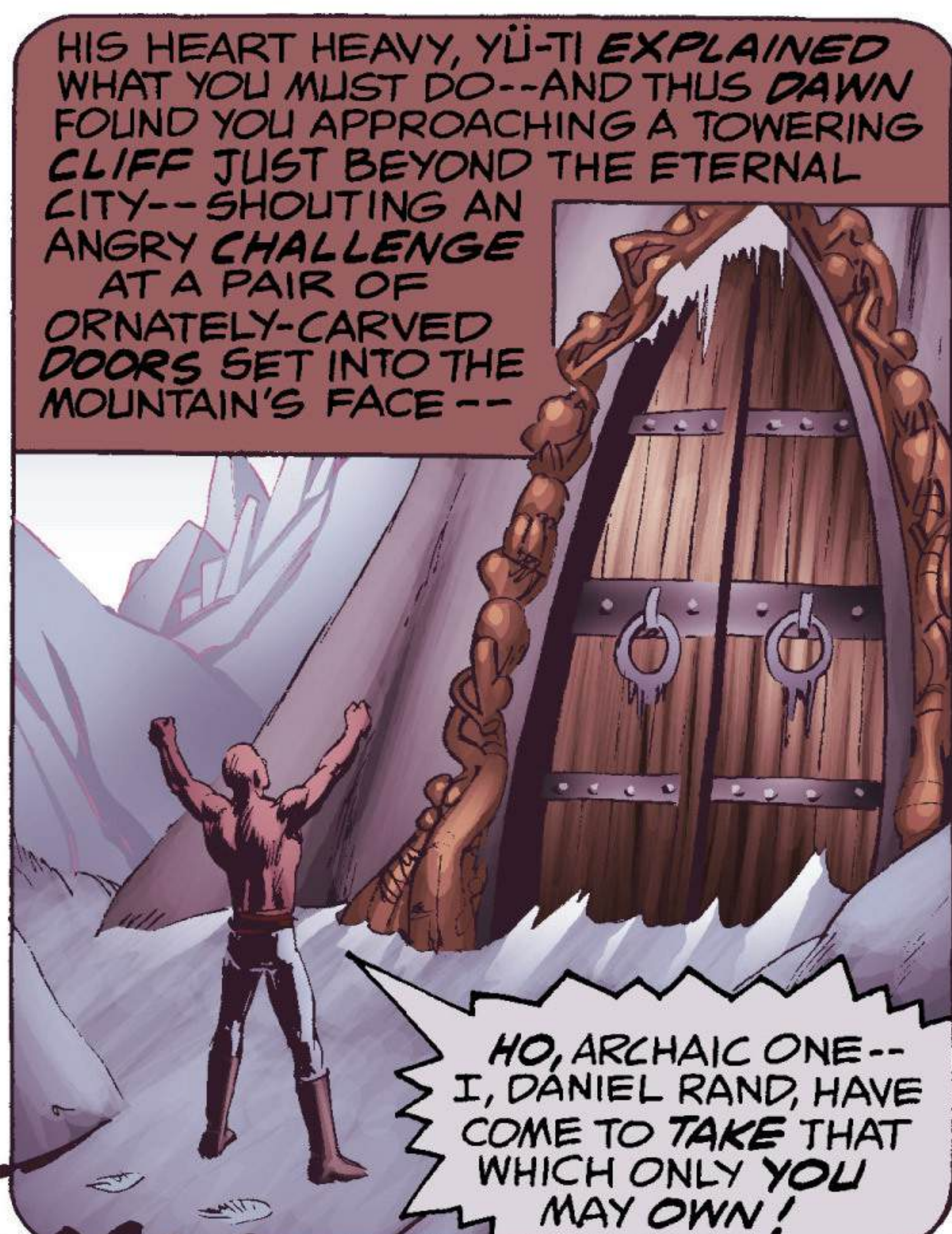
THERE IS ONE THING **MORE** YOU MAY ATTEMPT TO **GAIN** WHAT YOU DESIRE--

--BUT THE **PERILS** INVOLVED BY FAR OUTWEIGH THE **REWARD!**

ARE YOU READY TO RISK **DEATH** TO GAIN THE POWER OF--THE **IRON FIST!**

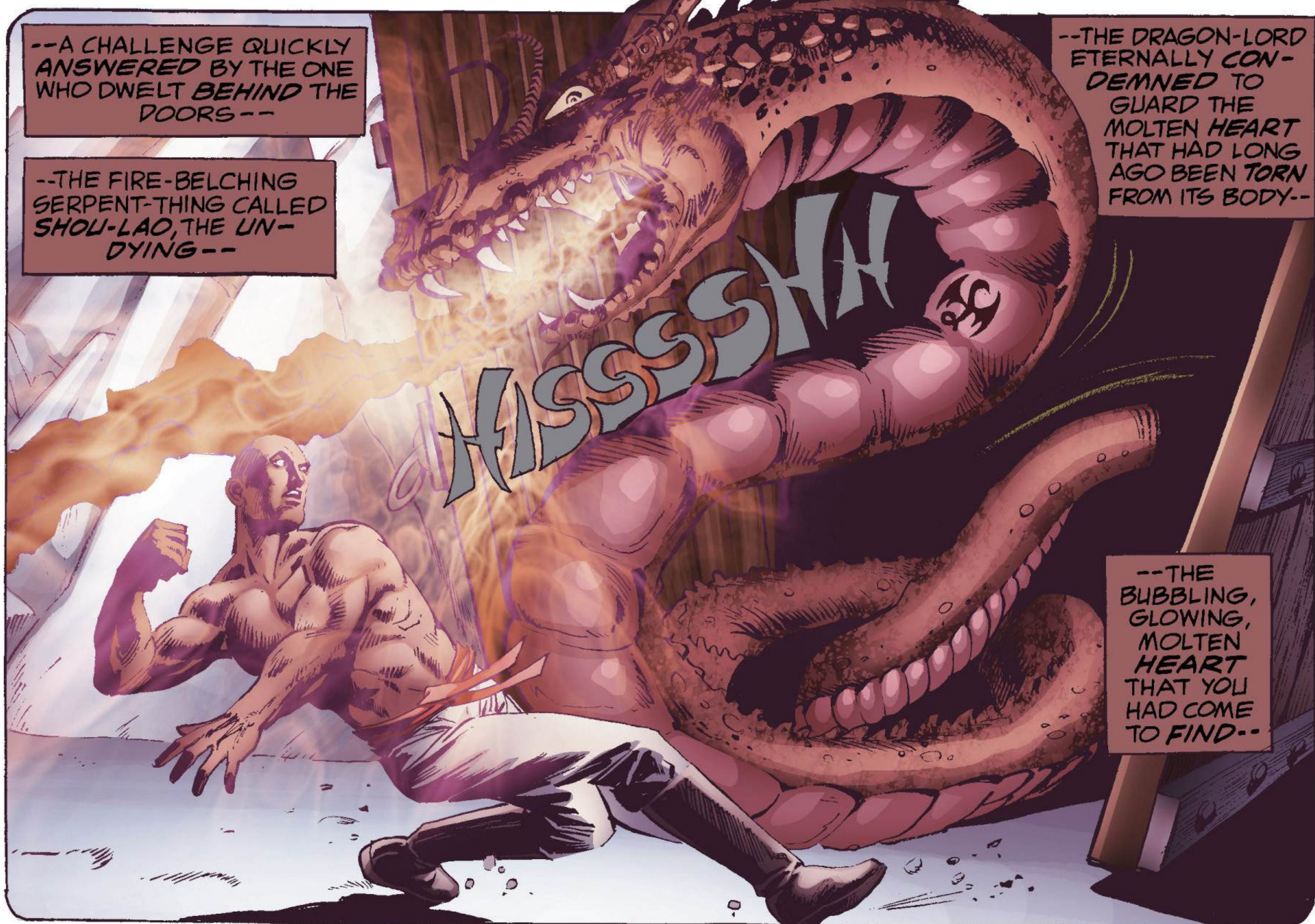


I...AM **READY!**



HIS HEART HEAVY, YÜ-TI EXPLAINED WHAT YOU MUST DO--AND THUS **DAWN** FOUND YOU APPROACHING A TOWERING **CLIFF** JUST BEYOND THE **ETERNAL CITY**--SHOUTING AN **ANGRY CHALLENGE** AT A PAIR OF **ORNATELY-CARVED DOORS** SET INTO THE MOUNTAIN'S FACE--

HO, **ARCHAIC ONE**--I, **DANIEL RAND**, HAVE COME TO **TAKE** THAT WHICH ONLY YOU MAY OWN!



--A CHALLENGE QUICKLY **ANSWERED** BY THE ONE WHO DWELT **BEHIND** THE **DOORS**--

--THE **FIRE-BELCHING SERPENT-THING** CALLED **SHOU-LAO**, THE **UN-DYING**--

--THE **DRAGON-LORD** ETERNALLY **CON-DEM**NED TO **GUARD** THE **MOLTEN HEART** THAT HAD LONG AGO BEEN **TORN** FROM ITS **BODY**--

--THE **BUBBLING, GLOWING, MOLTEN HEART** THAT YOU HAD COME TO **FIND**--

THE GREAT HORNED HEAD LUNGED FORWARD, UNBEARABLE **BREATH** SEARING THE FLESH OF YOUR **CHEEK**--

--AS YOU LEAPT TO ONE SIDE, DELIVERING A DEVASTATING **ROCK-SMASH BLOW**--

THUD!

--WHICH **STUNNED** THE UNDYING ONE AS INTENDED--

--BUT FOR ONLY AN **INSTANT**--

--AFTER WHICH YOU FOUND YOURSELF FACED WITH THE SAME **HIGH-IMPOSSIBLE PROBLEM**:

HOW DO I **DEFEAT** A CREATURE WHO CAN NOT BE **KILLED**?

FOR A MOMENT, YOU **PONDERED** THIS--

--THEN, A SILENT **PRAYER** UPON YOUR LIPS--

--YOU HURLED YOURSELF BOLDLY AT THE STRANGELY-SHAPED **SCAR** UPON THE DRAGON-LORD'S **BREAST**--

--FOR IT WAS **THRU** THIS **SCAR** THAT **SHOU-LAO'S** **HEART** WAS TAKEN--

--THRU THIS **SCAR** THAT THE UNDYING ONE RECEIVED THE MYSTIC **EMANATIONS** THAT ETERNALLY **SUSTAINED** HIM--

--AND IF THOSE **EMA-NATIONS** WERE TO BE SOMEHOW **BLOCKED OFF**--

--BY A **BODY**, PERHAPS?--

--BY YOUR **BODY**--

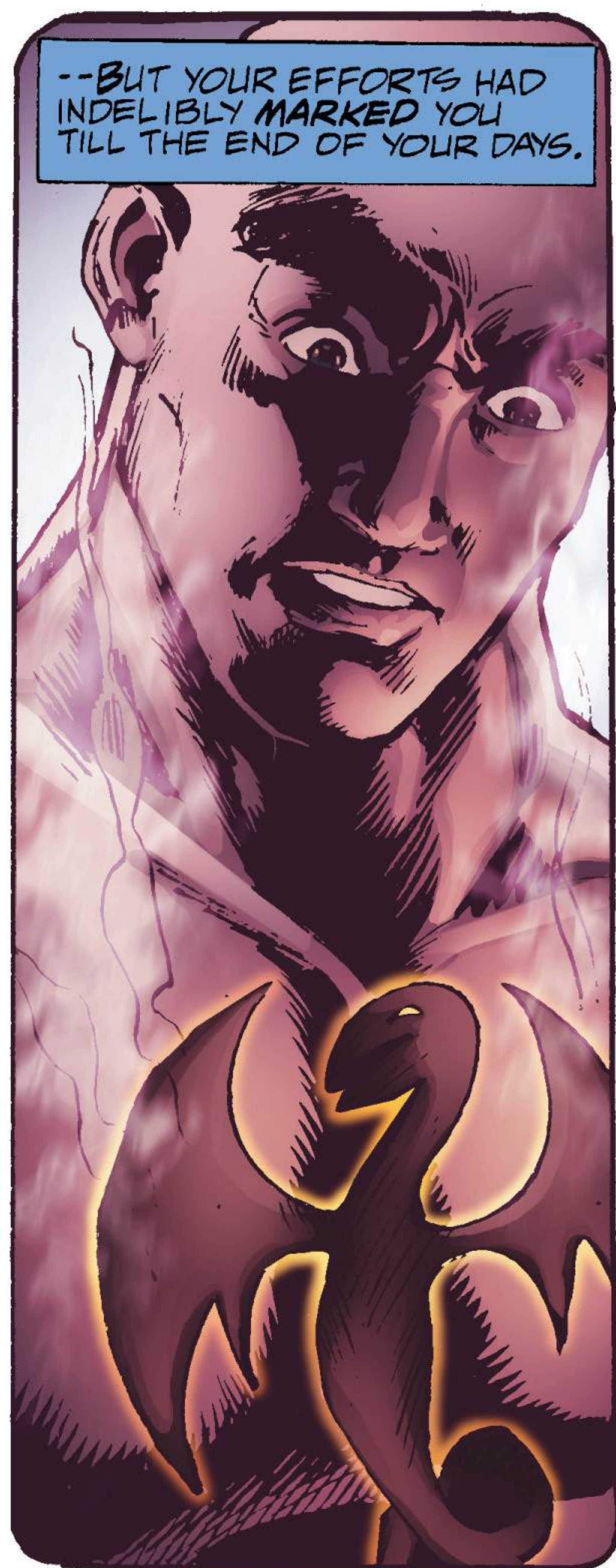
--THEN WHO COULD SAY WHAT MIGHT **OCCUR**?

THE **HEAT** POURING FROM THE **SCAR** WAS ALMOST **UNIMAGINABLE** AND THOUGH YOU COULD FEEL THE FLESH **BLISTERING** ON YOUR CHEST...

--STILL YOU **MAINTAINED** YOUR **HOLD**--

--UNTIL **UNCON-SCIOUSNESS** HAD CREEPED ALMOST UPON YOU--

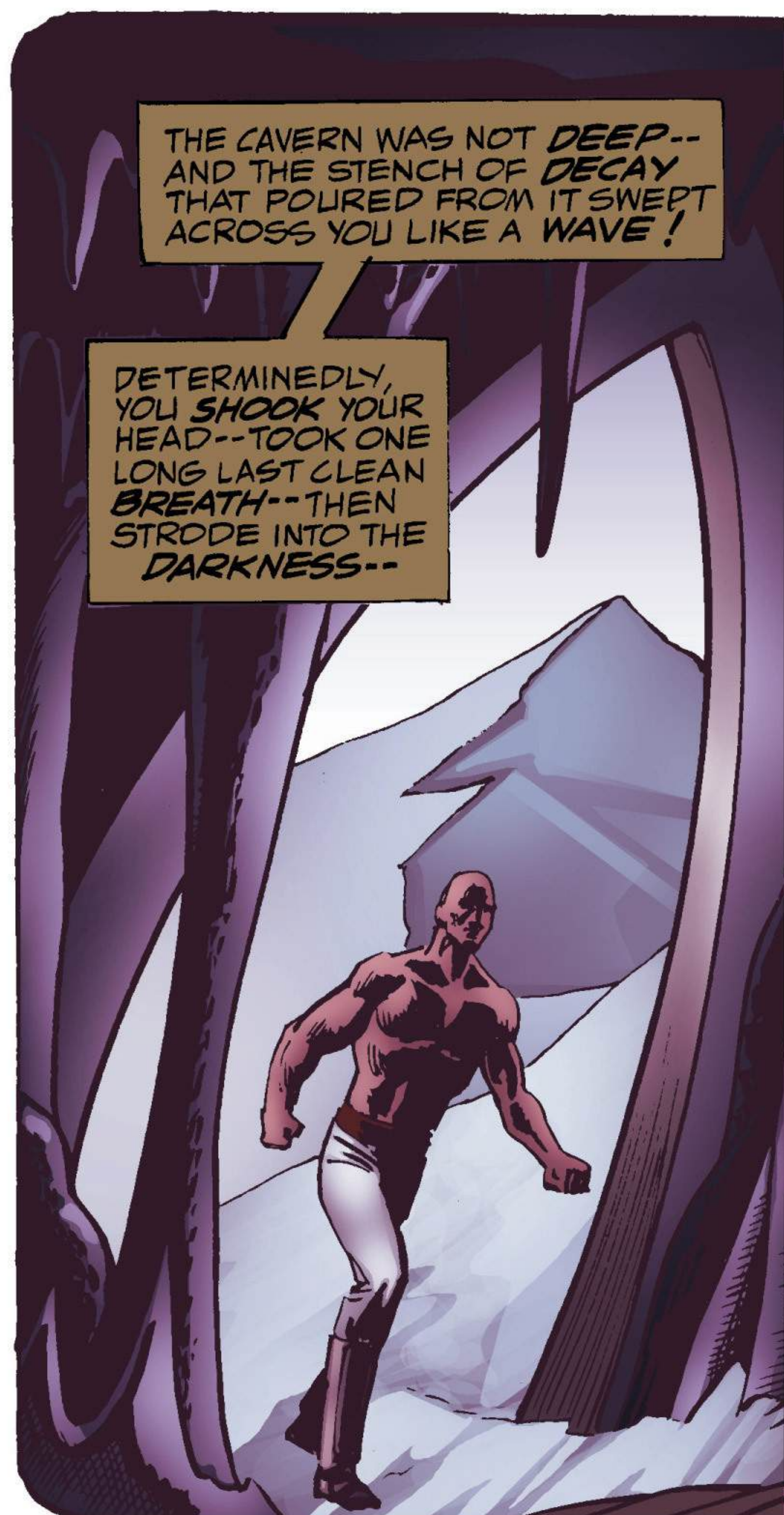
--AND THEN--**ABRUPTLY**--YOUR **PERSEVERANCE** WAS **REWARDED**--



--BUT YOUR EFFORTS HAD INDELIBLY MARKED YOU TILL THE END OF YOUR DAYS.



STILL, YOU HAD TRIUMPHED-- AND THIS HAD EARNED THE RIGHT TO CLAIM YOUR PRIZE!



THE CAVERN WAS NOT DEEP-- AND THE STENCH OF DECAY THAT POURED FROM IT SWEEPED ACROSS YOU LIKE A WAVE!

DETERMINEDLY, YOU SHOOK YOUR HEAD--TOOK ONE LONG LAST CLEAN BREATH--THEN STRODE INTO THE DARKNESS--

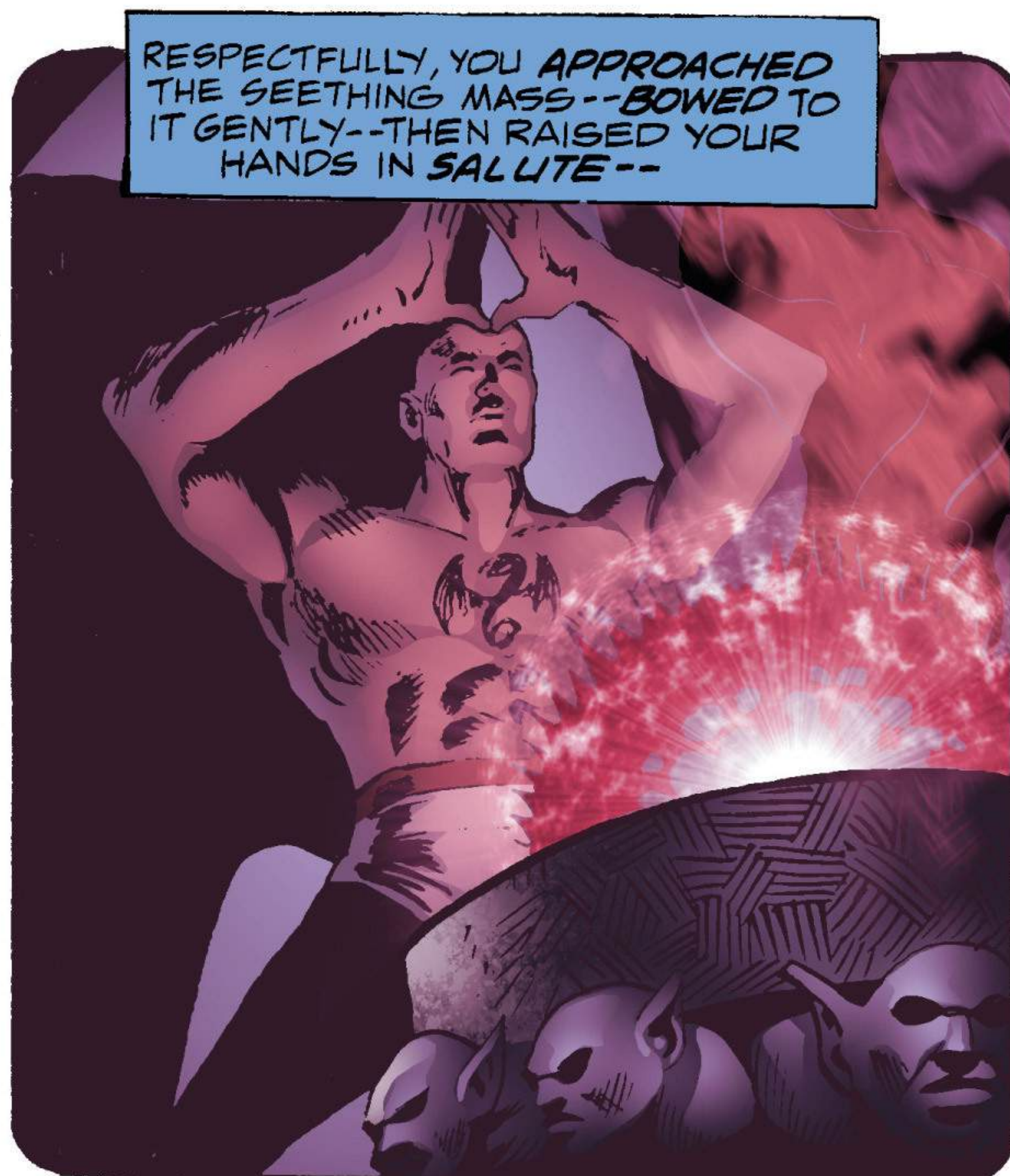


--AND FOUND IT A DARKNESS BROKEN BY THE LIGHT FROM A hideously-carved BRAZIER STANDING IN THE CAVERN'S CENTER-- A BRAZIER THAT BUBBLED AND PULSED AS IF IT HAD A LIFE OF ITS OWN--

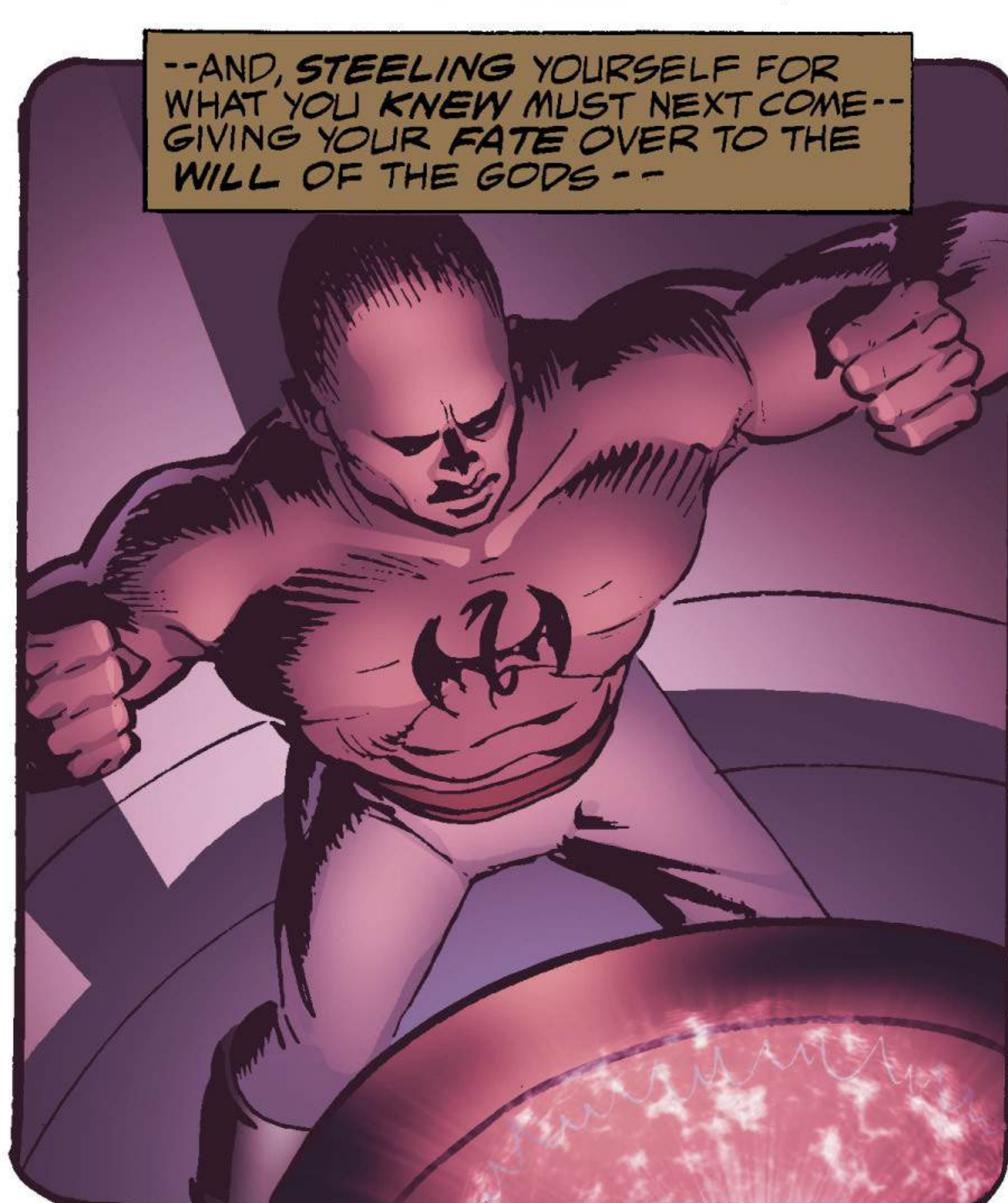
--AND, IN TRUTH, IT DID--

--FOR YOU BEHELD AT LAST, THE LIVING, BEATING SOUL OF SHOU-LAO, THE UNDYING--

THIS WAS THE HEART OF THE DRAGON!



RESPECTFULLY, YOU APPROACHED THE SEETHING MASS--BOWED TO IT GENTLY--THEN RAISED YOUR HANDS IN SALUTE--

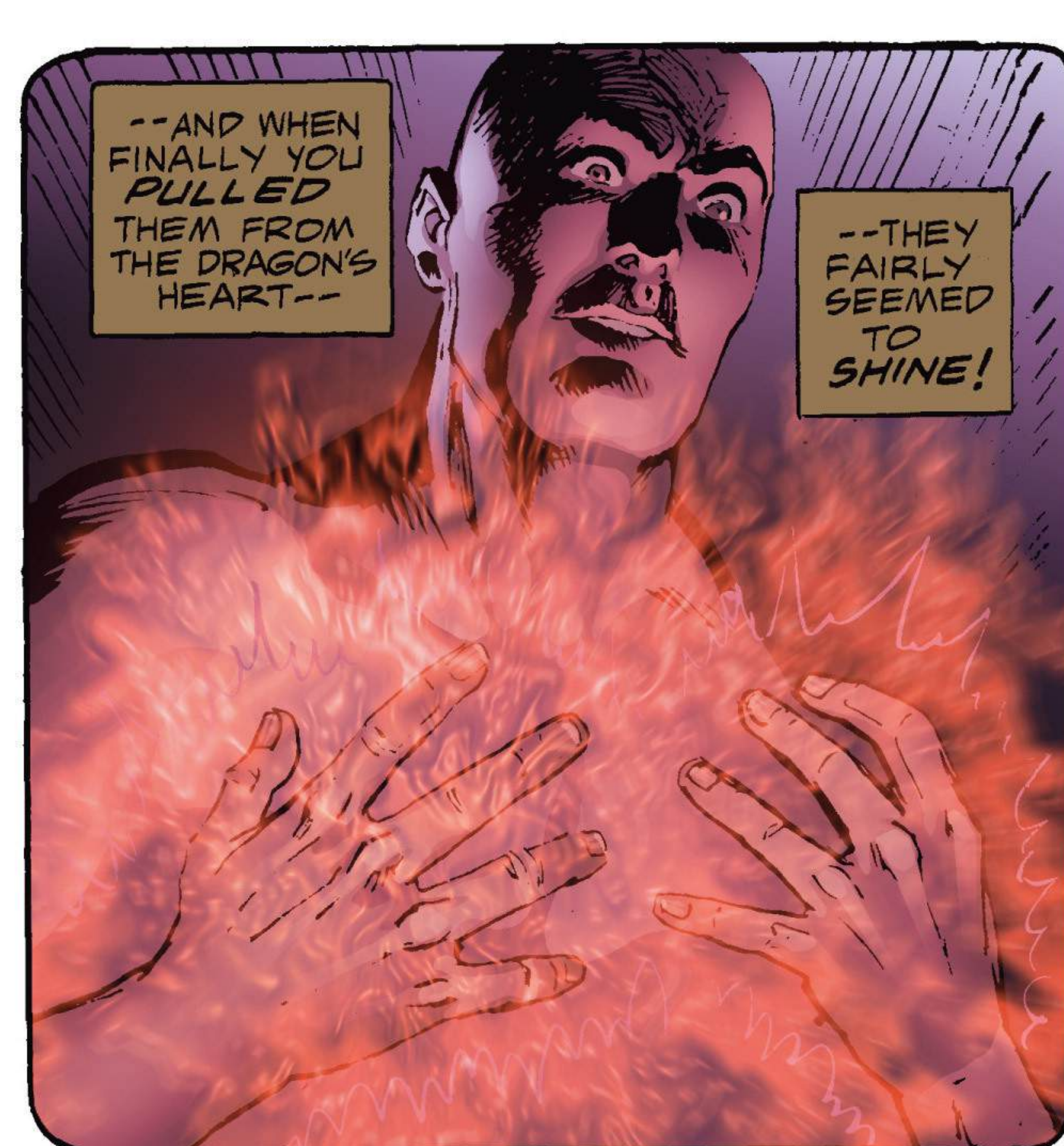


--AND, STEELING YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU KNEW MUST NEXT COME-- GIVING YOUR FATE OVER TO THE WILL OF THE GODS--



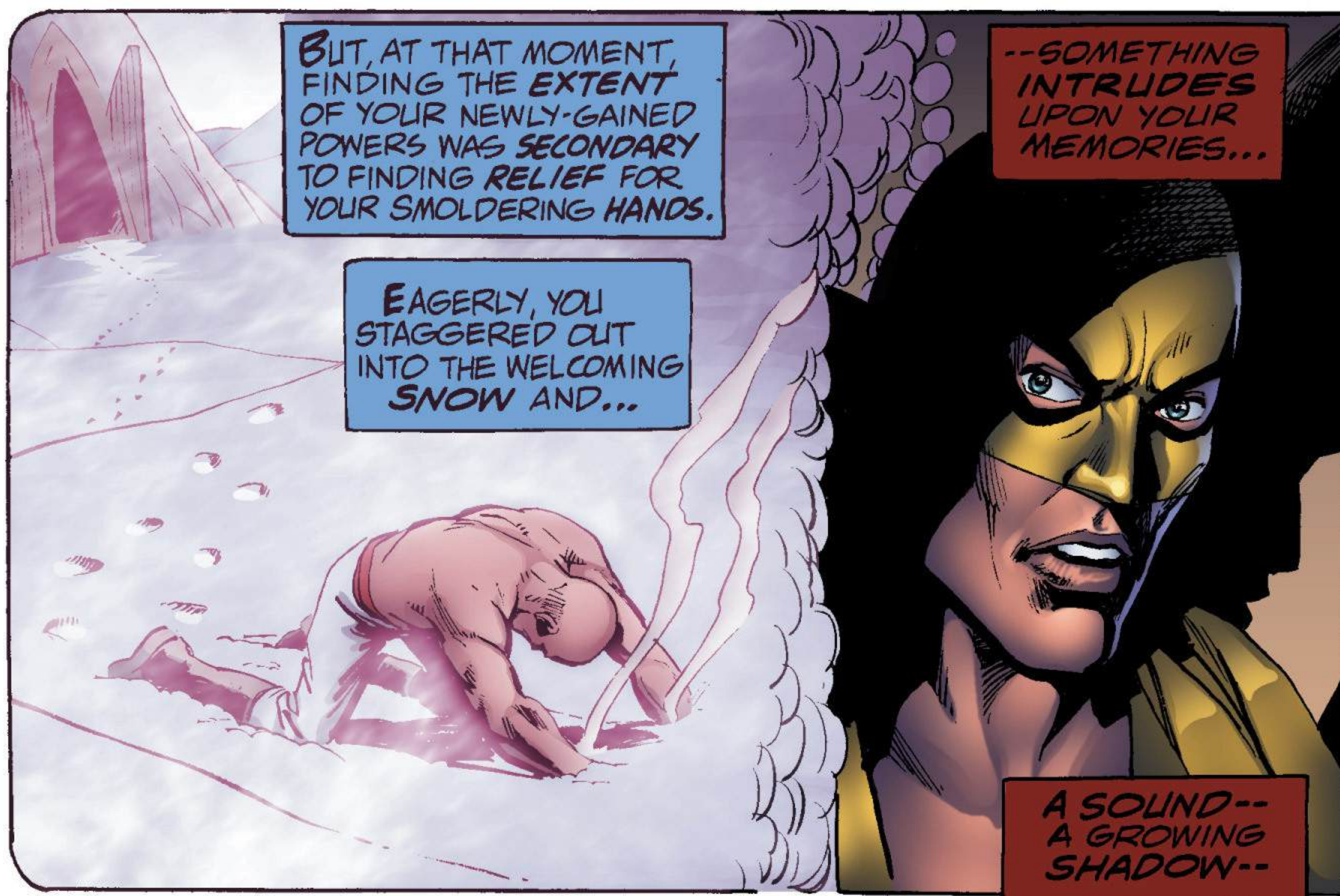
--YOU PLUNGED YOUR OPEN HANDS AGONIZINGLY INTO THE GLOWING MOLTEN ESSENCE--

--AGAIN--AND AGAIN--AND AGAIN--



--AND WHEN FINALLY YOU PULLED THEM FROM THE DRAGON'S HEART--

--THEY FAIRLY SEEMED TO SHINE!



BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, FINDING THE **EXTENT** OF YOUR NEWLY-GAINED POWERS WAS **SECONDARY** TO FINDING **RELIEF** FOR YOUR SMOLDERING HANDS.

EAGERLY, YOU STAGGERED OUT INTO THE WELCOMING SNOW AND...

--SOMETHING INTRUDES UPON YOUR MEMORIES...

A SOUND--
A GROWING SHADOW--



--AND YOU ARE NO LONGER ALONE IN THE ALLEYWAY!



THANKS, JOKER-- FOR SAVING ME THE BOTHER OF HUNTING YOU DOWN!

THOSE OTHER PUNKS TOLD ME YOU WERE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD-- TOLD ME WHAT YOU DID TO THEM--

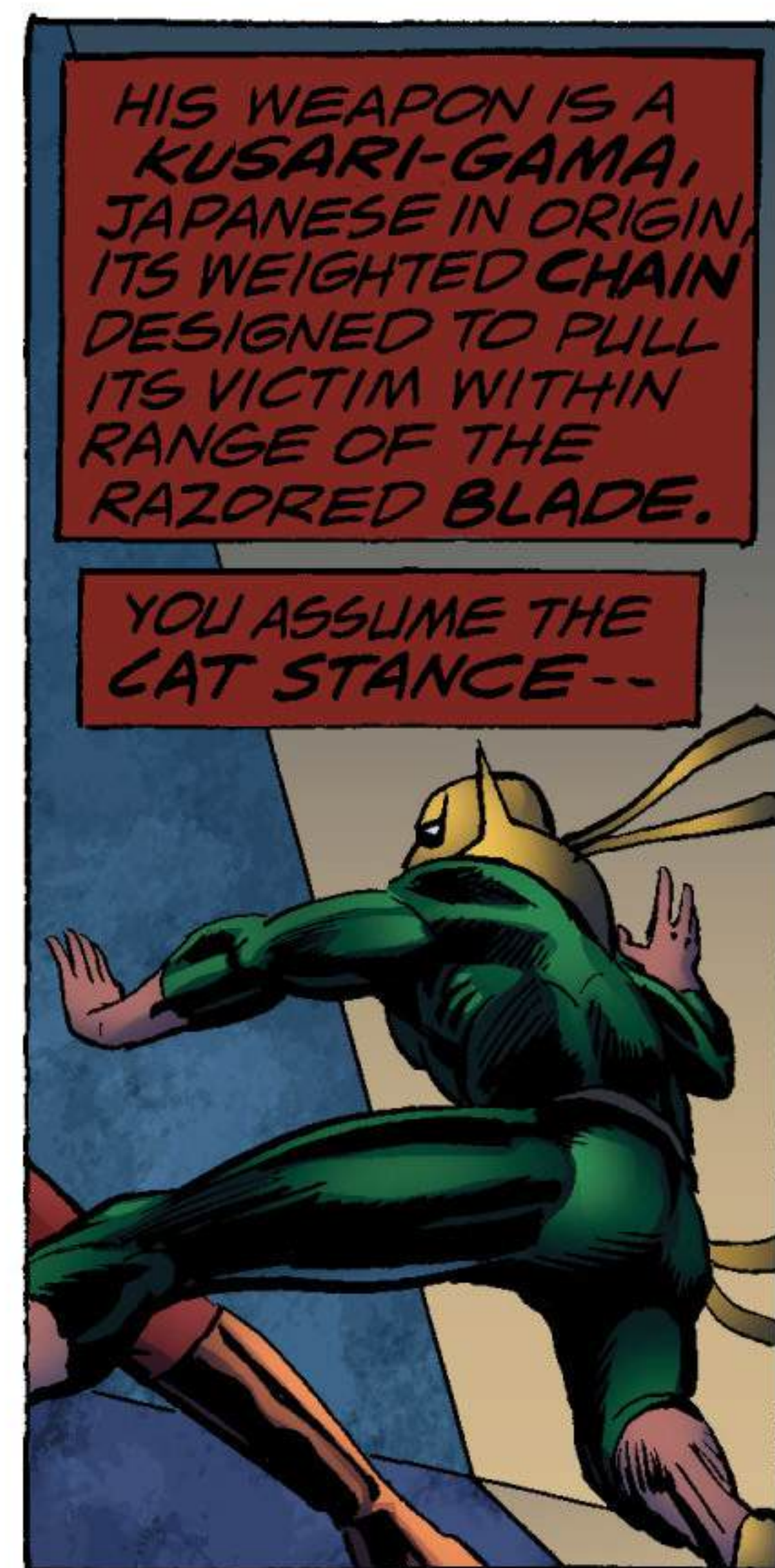
--BUT YOU WON'T HAVE A CHANCE TO TRY YOUR TRICKS ON--
SCYTHE!

I DO NOT WISH ANY TROUBLE!



MAYBE NOT--BUT YOU'VE GOT IT!

YOU'RE WORTH TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS TO THE MAN WHO BRINGS YOU IN!



HIS WEAPON IS A **KUSARI-GAMA**, JAPANESE IN ORIGIN, ITS WEIGHTED CHAIN DESIGNED TO PULL ITS VICTIM WITHIN RANGE OF THE RAZORED BLADE.

YOU ASSUME THE CAT STANCE--



--SENSE THE SPEED OF THE STUDDED STEEL BALL AS IT HURTTLES TOWARDS YOUR HEAD--

--AND FOR THAT KIND OF MONEY, I DON'T PLAY GAMES!



--AND, AT THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT, YOU SNAP YOUR HEAD ASIDE!



HEY, YOU'RE GOOD, JOKER-- EVEN BETTER THAN THOSE MUSCLE-BOUND MORONS MADE YOU OUT TO BE--

--BUT NOBODY CAN AVOID MY GRAPPLE-BALL FOREVER--



--AND JOKER-- THAT INCLUDES YOU!!

YOU SPIN AWAY-- A FRACTION OF A SECOND TOO LATE!

THE WEIGHTED BALL CAROMS OFF YOUR SHOULDER--



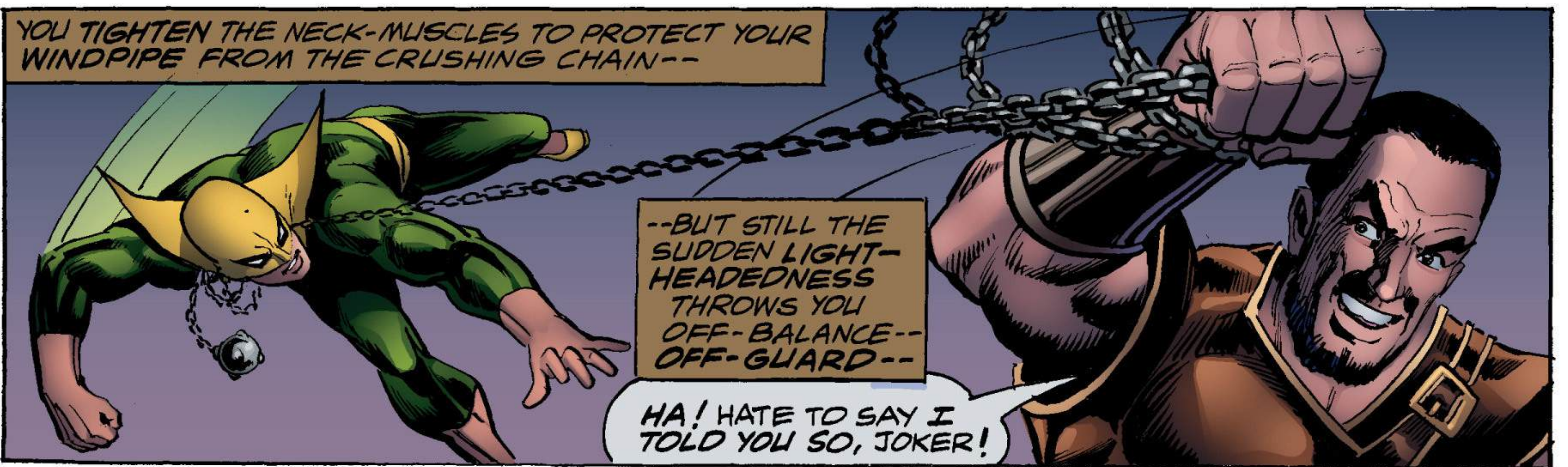
--AND YOU CONCENTRATE ON THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN--

--DULLING IT-- SLOWLY DEADENING IT COMPLETELY--



--A PROCESS WHICH TAKES ONLY A MOMENT--

--BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, A MOMENT IS ALL THAT SCYTHE NEEDS!



YOU TIGHTEN THE NECK-MUSCLES TO PROTECT YOUR WINDPIPE FROM THE CRUSHING CHAIN--

--BUT STILL THE SUDDEN LIGHT-HEADEDNESS THROWS YOU OFF-BALANCE-- OFF-GUARD--

HA! HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO, JOKER!



--AND, AS DARKNESS THREATENS TO PULL YOU DOWN FOREVER, THE MEMORIES COME ONCE AGAIN...

ONE WEEK PAST: IT IS YOUR DAY OF DESTINY. YOU STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF YÜ-TI AND THE LUNG-WANG-- THE FOUR DRAGON-KINGS-- AS THE AUGUST ONE ADDRESSES YOU--

ARE YOU READY, MY SON, TO BE CHALLENGED--

--TO PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY OF JOINING THE COMPANY OF IMMORTALS?



I HUMBLY AWAIT YOUR PLEASURE, O FATHER-HEAVEN.



THUS YOU MET THE CHALLENGE OF THE MANY-- FOUR MARTIAL-ARTS MASTERS WHO FELL LIKE BRITTLE CHINA DOLLS BEFORE YOU--

KHOK!

THAP!



--THEN THE CHALLENGE OF THE ONE-- THE CHALLENGE OF SHU-HU, CALLED THE LIGHTNING--

SHKOW!

--REVEALED AT LAST TO BE A ROBOT-- BY YOUR AWESOME IRON FIST--

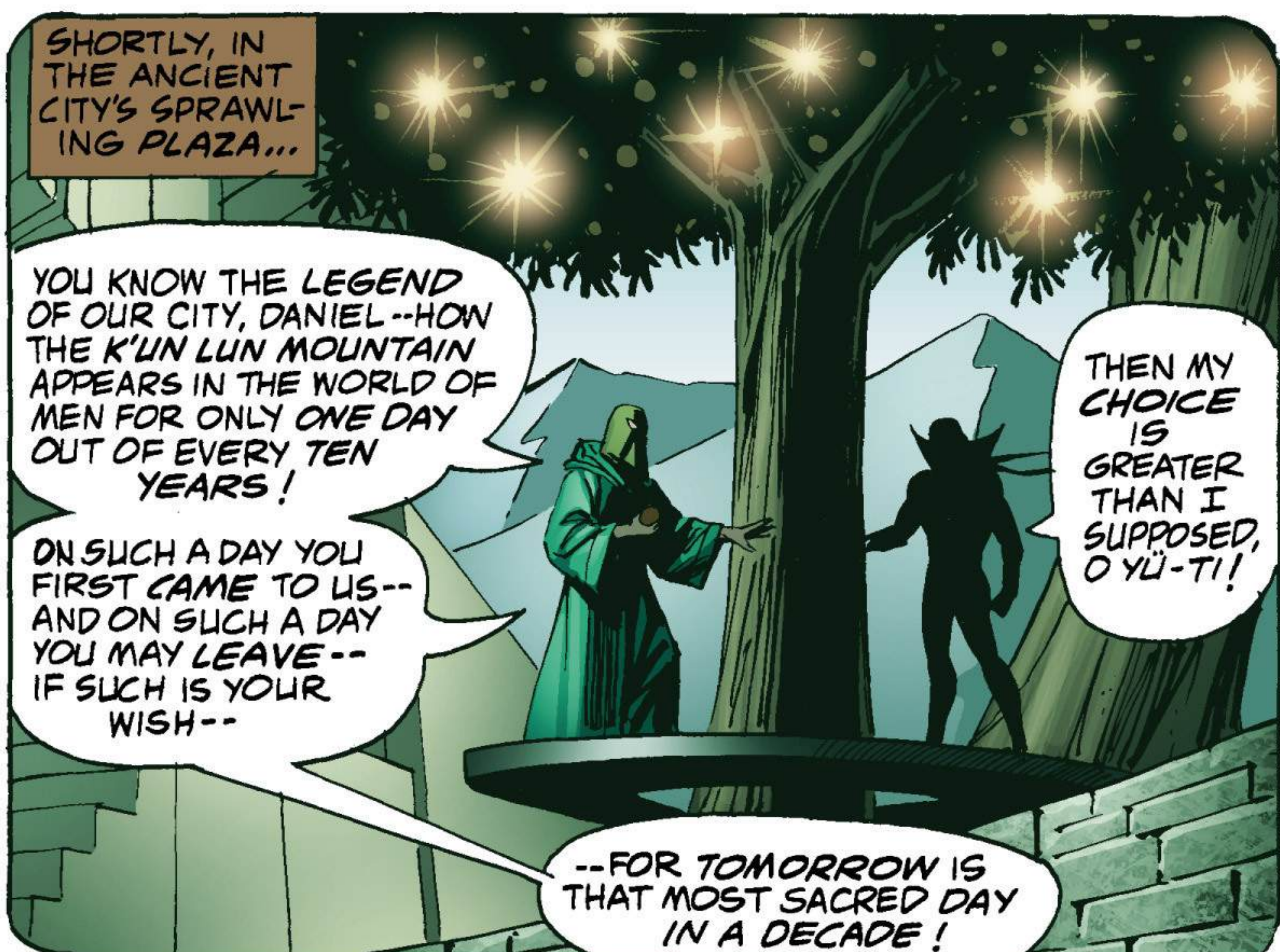


--AND FINALLY...

MY SON, YOU HAVE WON THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ETERNAL LIFE --AND DEATH!

I AM READY, HOODED ONE!

THEN COME WITH ME, DANIEL RAND-- TO THE TREE OF IMMORTALITY!



SHORTLY, IN THE ANCIENT CITY'S SPRAWLING PLAZA...

YOU KNOW THE LEGEND OF OUR CITY, DANIEL-- HOW THE K'UN LUN MOUNTAIN APPEARS IN THE WORLD OF MEN FOR ONLY ONE DAY OUT OF EVERY TEN YEARS!

ON SUCH A DAY YOU FIRST CAME TO US-- AND ON SUCH A DAY YOU MAY LEAVE-- IF SUCH IS YOUR WISH--

THEN MY CHOICE IS GREATER THAN I SUPPOSED, O YÜ-TI!

--FOR TOMORROW IS THAT MOST SACRED DAY IN A DECADE!

TO EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF IMMORTALITY AND DWELL AMONG THE ETERNAL PEOPLE OF K'UN LUN FOREVER--

--OR TO PASS TO-MORROW OUT THRU THE CITY'S GATES AND INTO THE WORLD OF MEN--NEVER TO RETURN HERE!

THEN MAKE YOUR DECISION, MY SON--AND EAT OF THE FRUIT I'VE PLUCKED FOR YOU.

I WANT TO, AUGUST ONE-- BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THAT-- BUT I CANNOT!

TOMORROW I AM GOING BACK TO CIVILIZATION-- TO FIND HAROLD MEACHUM, THE MAN WHO MURDERED MY FATHER!

THEN ALL THE YEARS YOU HAVE SPENT AMONG US HAVE NOT DIMMED THE FIRES OF REVENGE IN YOUR HEART, DANIEL!

NO, YÜ-TI--THEY HAVE NOT!

I'VE TRIED TO QUENCH THEM-- TRIED TO BLOT THEM OUT-- BUT EVERY NIGHT, THE IMAGE OF MY FATHER HURTLING TO HIS DOOM AWAKENS ME IN A SWEAT.

BUT WHAT WILL REVENGE GAIN YOU? WILL IT PROVIDE SUCCOR FOR YOUR SOUL?

I WILL NOT-- CANNOT-- REST UNTIL MEACHUM HAS PAID FOR HIS CRIME!

HATRED IS A FLOWER WHOSE ROOTS STRANGLE ALL THEY ENCOMPASS, MY SON!

HATRED? WHAT COULD YOU KNOW OF HATRED, OLD MAN? WHAT COULD AN IMMORTAL KNOW OF THE PAIN OF A LOVED ONE'S DEATH?

I KNOW MORE THAN YOU COULD IMAGINE, DANIEL--

--FOR WENDELL RAND WAS NOT ONLY YOUR FATHER--

--HE WAS ALSO MY BROTHER!

YÜ-TI'S ANSWER STUNS YOU--

--BUT IT DOES NOT PREVENT YOUR LEAVING K'UN LUN MOUNTAIN THE NEXT MORNING AS INTENDED.

AND, AS THE GATES OF THE MYSTICAL CITY FADED IN THE MISTS BEHIND YOU, PERHAPS YOU FELT A TINGE OF REGRET...

--FOR THIS TIME ADAM WAS NOT CAST OUT OF PARADISE...

...THIS TIME HE STALKED OUT OF HIS OWN ACCORD...

--AND YOU FIGHT OFF THE ENCROACHING BLACKNESS TO SEE RAZORED DEATH WHISTLING TOWARDS YOUR THROAT!



YOU THRUST
OUT A
HAND--

--STEEL-CABLE MUSCLES
HALT THE DESCENDING
BLADE--



--AND YOU CONCENTRATE--
DRAWING THE BLOOD TO YOUR
BRAIN--FORCING YOURSELF
BACK TO TOTAL AWARENESS--

SMOOTH MOVE, JOKER--
DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD
THAT ONE STILL IN
YOU!

THEN THE MAN CALLED
SCYTHE TIGHTENS HIS
GRIP ON THE CHAIN--
AND THIS TIME YOU
ALLOW YOURSELF TO
BE PULLED OFF--
BALANCE.



FOR AN INSTANT, THE
TENSION ON THE
CHAIN GROWS SLACK--

THRUNCH!!

--AND, IN THAT
INSTANT--YOU
ACT!



BUT YOUR LEATHER-GARBED OPPONENT
DOES NOT LET GO OF THE CHAIN!

MAN, YOU'RE JUST
FULL OF SURPRISES,
AREN'T YOU, JOKER?

WELL, I'LL JUST
HAVE TO MAKE
SURE YOU DON'T
PULL THAT ONE
AGAIN!

YOU
ANTICIPATE
SCYTHE'S MOVE,
YOUR ROCK-HARD
FINGERS
STRIVING
DESPERATELY
TO PRY THE
FORGED
STEEL
GARROTE
FROM YOUR
NECK--



--BUT YOUR
EFFORTS SEEM
ONLY TO PULL
IT THAT MUCH
TIGHTER!



AN INVOLUNTARY **GURGLE**
ESCAPES YOUR CONSTRICTED
THROAT--AND SCYTHE GRINS
AS HE WHIPS YOU INTO THE
SPLINTERED FENCE--

I LET YOU
GET THOSE
HANDS
ON ME--
AND I'VE
HAD IT!

--BUT THAT'S
A LITTLE
PROBLEM
I CAN EASILY
SOLVE!

THUMP!

NOW YOU JUST HANG IN THERE ANOTHER FEW SECONDS, JOKER-- AND IT'LL ALL BE OVER!

OLD SCYTHER DOESN'T HAVE TO SEE YOU TO FINISH YOU!



THEN A HARSH WHISPER CUTS THE AIR--

--AND THE ASSASSIN'S BLADE PIERCES THE WEATHERED WOOD LIKE BUTTER--



THWOK!



KTANG!

--AGAIN--



THWAK!

--AND AGAIN!



--AND YOU STUDY EACH THRUST CAREFULLY--THE ANGLE OF PENETRATION--THE FORCE OF THE BLOW--

CHAK!



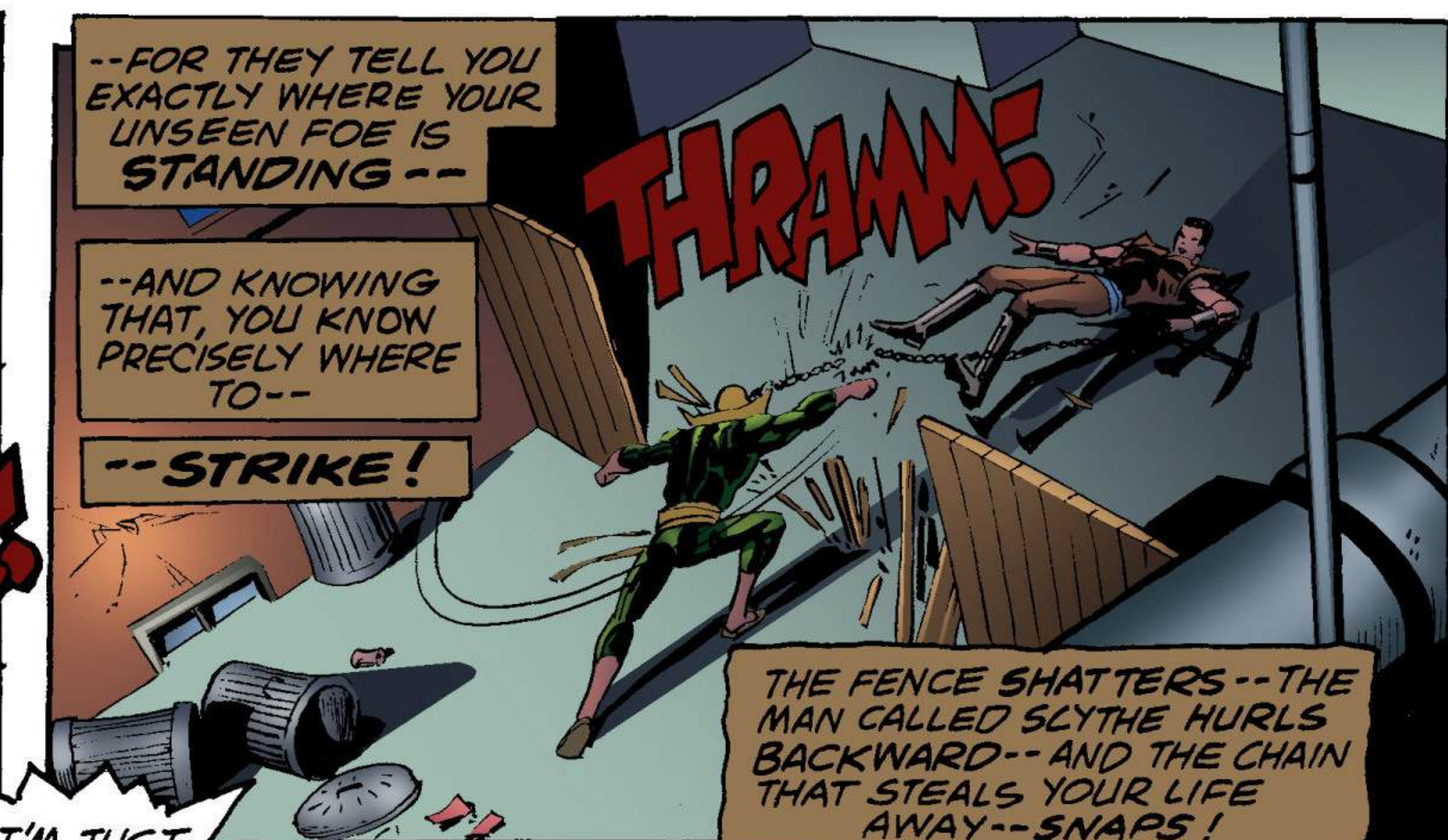
--FOR THEY TELL YOU EXACTLY WHERE YOUR UNSEEN FOE IS STANDING --

--AND KNOWING THAT, YOU KNOW PRECISELY WHERE TO--

--STRIKE!

THRAME!

THE FENCE SHATTERS--THE MAN CALLED SCYTHER HURLS BACKWARD-- AND THE CHAIN THAT STEALS YOUR LIFE AWAY--SNAPS!

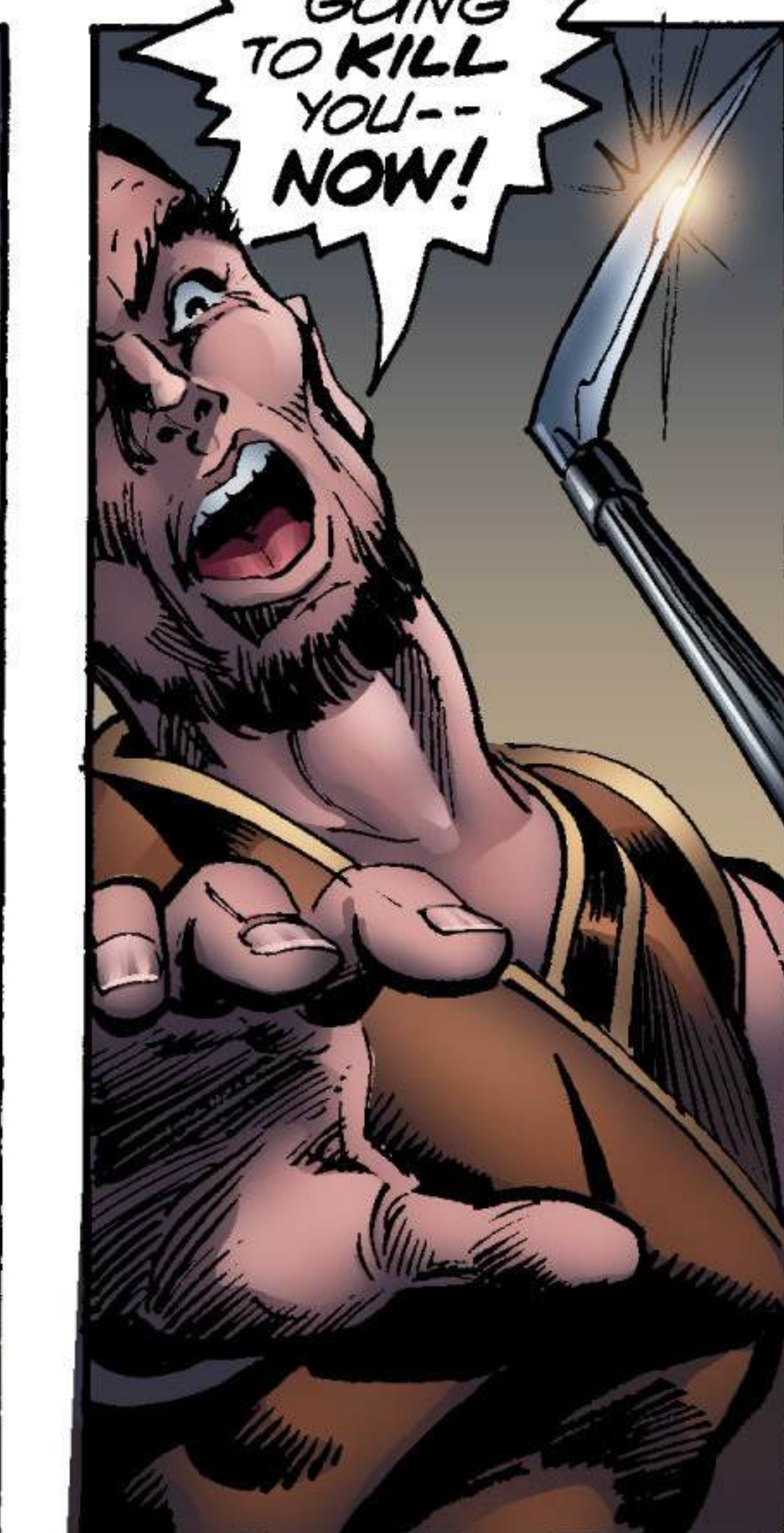


OKAY, JOKER-- THAT DID IT!

NO MORE MESSING AROUND!



I'M JUST GOING TO KILL YOU-- NOW!



YOU STEEL YOURSELF, DRAWING ON YOUR CHI, YOUR INNER RESOURCES--

--FOCUSING EVERY IOTA OF YOUR BEING INTO YOUR HAND--

--UNTIL IT SEEMS TO SMOULDER AND GLOW--





--AND BECOMES LIKE A THING OF IRON!

BWOON!



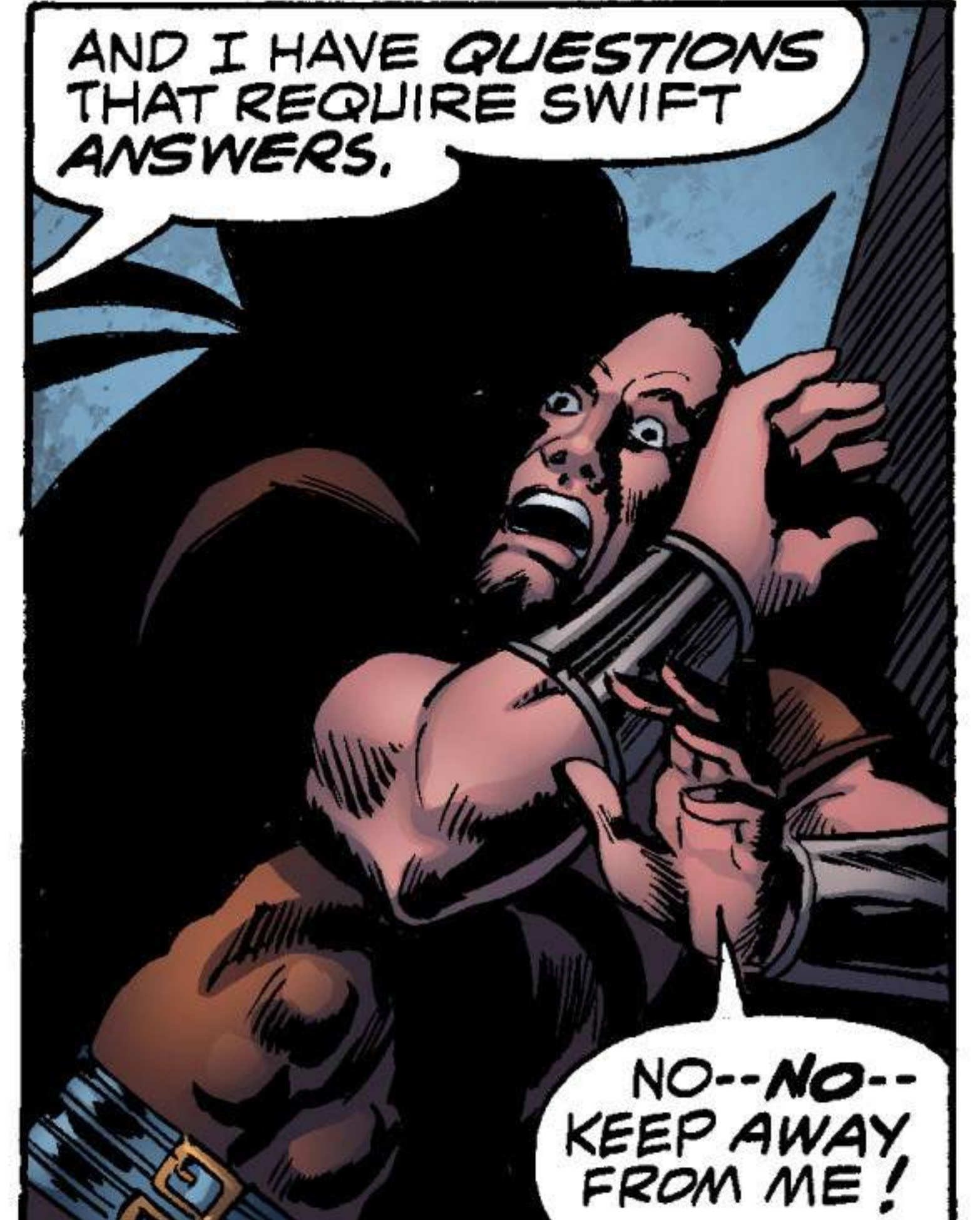
N-NO--
IT'S
NOT
POS-
SIBLE!!

MY BLADE--
THE JOKER
VAPORIZED
IT--!



MY NAME IS NOT
"JOKER", SCYTHER.

IT IS...
IRON,
FIST!



AND I HAVE QUESTIONS
THAT REQUIRE SWIFT
ANSWERS.

NO--NO--
KEEP AWAY
FROM ME!



YOU WERE GOING TO KILL
ME, SCYTHER--BECAUSE A
MAN PUT A **GENEROUS**
PRICE ON
MY HEAD.

I WANT TO
KNOW WHO--
AND
WHY!

OKAY--I'LL
TELL YOU
ANYTHING!
ONLY DON'T
PUT THOSE
HANDS ON
ME!



WH-WHY THE GUY IS
AFTER YOU I DON'T
KNOW--JUST THAT
HIS NAME IS
MEACHUM--

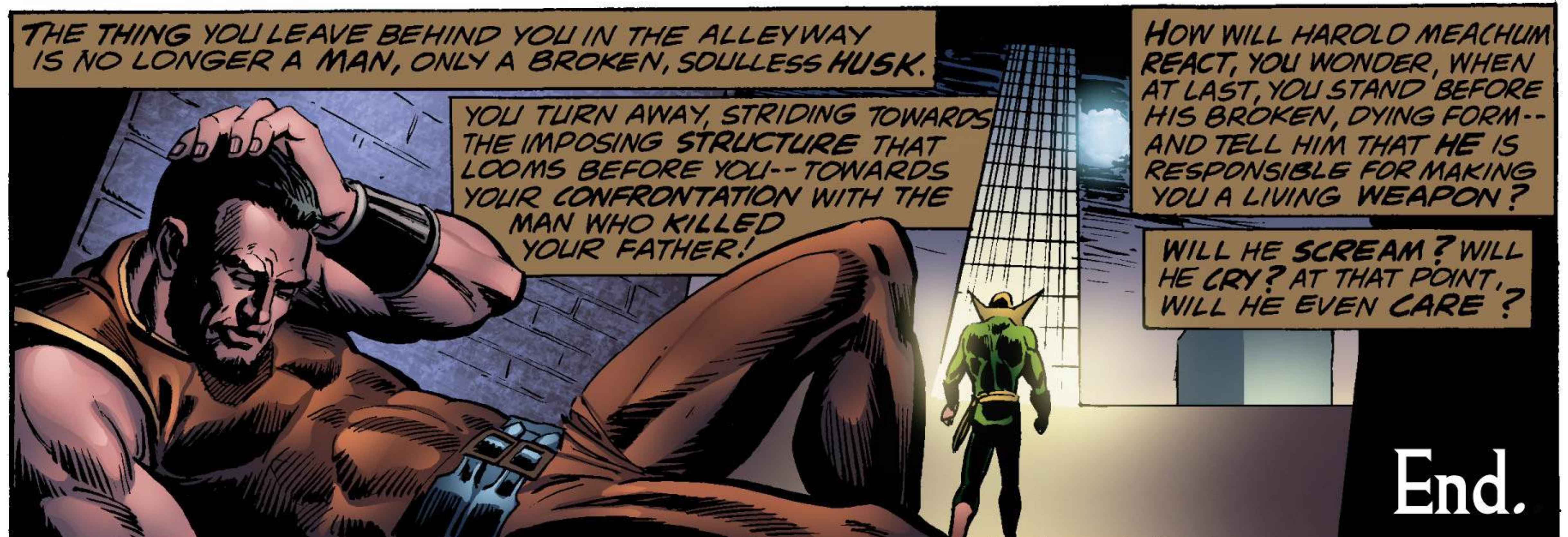
--AND THAT HE
OWNS THAT UGLY
SKYSCRAPER
A FEW BLOCKS
OVER!

THAT
ONE?



YEAH--THAT'S IT--AND
THAT'S ALL I KNOW--
I SWEAR IT!

NOW, PLEASE--
GO AWAY--AND
LET ME DIE
IN PEACE!



THE THING YOU LEAVE BEHIND YOU IN THE ALLEYWAY
IS NO LONGER A MAN, ONLY A BROKEN, SOULLESS HUSK.

YOU TURN AWAY, STRIDING TOWARDS
THE IMPOSING STRUCTURE THAT
LOOMS BEFORE YOU-- TOWARDS
YOUR CONFRONTATION WITH THE
MAN WHO KILLED
YOUR FATHER!

HOW WILL HAROLD MEACHUM
REACT, YOU WONDER, WHEN
AT LAST, YOU STAND BEFORE
HIS BROKEN, DYING FORM--
AND TELL HIM THAT HE IS
RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING
YOU A LIVING WEAPON?

WILL HE SCREAM? WILL
HE CRY? AT THAT POINT,
WILL HE EVEN CARE?

End.

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